apersivimiento q'e como no puede dejar de haber en aquellas inmediaciones otras mercedes reales en que es necesario que á la data y señalamiento de esta nueva merced se lleben los instrumentos y papeles de los que pudiesen alindar con esta; para que con mayor claridad se pueda hacer el reparto de ello y diviciones á fin de que en lo presente ni en lo futuro se formen pleitos in discordias: por lo que me parace muy conveniente se observe la forma que se previene. Asi lo provei, mandé y firmé con los testigos de mi asistencia actuando por receptoria á falta de Escribano Real que no lo hay, y en papel comun por no correr otro en este Reyno. D. Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Ant'o de Herrero, José Terrus. Queda anotada en mi libro de govno, que para en el archibo de esta capital á fojas 68 v'ta. Santa Fe, y Enero 25 de 1742. Mendoza. En este puesto de N. S. de Belem, jurisdiccion de la Villa de Albuquerque en diez y nueve dias del mes de Dic'c del año de mil selec'tos cuarenta yo el capitan Don Nicolas Duran y Chavez, Alcalde Mayor y Capitan a guerra de dicha villa y Jurisdiccion en virtud del auto del S'or Th'e Coronel D'n Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Gov'r Cap'n Gen'l de este Reyno pronunciado el quince del pp'do Nob'e del mismo año en que me manda pase y de, Real posesion al capitan diego de Torres en cabeza de todos los mensionados y firmados en el escrito que antecede, por el tenor de su pedimento se les concede en nombre de su Magestad cuyo auto fue intimado por mi orden, á los vecinos y circunvecinos de dichas tierras en las que no hallando ninguna contradicion sobre lo que pide, pasé á dar la posesion lindando dichas tierras por la parte del Norte con las del capitan D'n Nicolas Duran y Chavez, por la del sur afrontado á las ruinas de la casa de Fhpe. Romero: Por el Poniente el Rio Puerco, por lo que mira á la otra banda del Rio del Norte, con el lind'o de los pobladores de la Pura y limpia Concepcion y por el oriente con la Sierra de Sandia, y por el sur con paderes y ruinas de dicha casa del espresado Felipe Pumero y habiendo reconosido dichos linderos con tres testigos de asistencia é instrumentales segun derecho, tomé de lo mano al referido Torres, lo pasie por sus tierras y dio voces, arrancó sacate, tiró piedras é hizo otras demostraciones que en semejantes casos se requieren persiviendo esta posesion en nombre de su Mag'd quieta y pacificamente con los mismos linderos que espresa su peticion en los cuales mandé se pusiesen perpetuas mohoneras, dandosele dichas tierras libres y generalmente con pastos, aguas, abrevaderos, montes resos y costumbres para que las goze, por si sus hijos herederos y sucesores sin perjuicio ninguno y esta real posesion, le sea de bastante titulo, y por ella las goze como dicho es; puez para que conste lo puse por diligencia siendo testigos instrumentales Bernabé Baca y Baltazar Baca, y los de mi asistensia que lo firmaron con migo actuando como Juez receptor en el presente papel comun por no correr en estas partes el sellado. Ante mi, y como Juez receptor, Nicolas de Chavez. De ass'a, J'n Mig'l Albares del Castillo. De ass'a, Guillermo Sabedra. En la villa de Santa Fé, capital de este Reyno de N. Mejico, a los veinte dias del mes de Julio de mil setecientos cuarenta y dos, yo el Th'e Coronel D. Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Gov'r y Cap'n Gen'l de este dicho Reyno por su Mag'd (Q. D. G.) digo que hallandome informado que diferentes vecinos que se incluyen en la presente Merced que se les hizo por mi dicho Th'e Coronel en nombre del Rey N. S. y por cabeza de ella el Capitan Diego Torres devia mandar y

mande que todas las personas que no han ocupado dicha merced y puesto, ni fuesen á ocuparla en el termino de treinta dias que deberan contarse desde el dia de la fecha se les dá por escluidos á la merced y tierras que pudieran tener derecho á ellas si las hubiesen habitado; y que los pertenecientes de tierras á estos que se escluyan si no complen con lo ordenado se darán por realengas ó se repartirán en las personas que las habitan debiendo cumplir con lo que sitan las leyes reales sobre poblar y cultivar las tierras; y asi lo provei, mandé y firmé con los de mi asistensia en la forma acostumbrada, y en el presente papel por no haber otro de que doy fé. Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza. Testigos, Salvador Martinez y Ant'o Giole.

Es sacado de una copia legalizada de la original que se halla en el archibo de Santa Fé en un libro de Gobierno para los años de 1740, arriba a su fojas sesenta y ocho v'ta.

LUIS DIAS DE LEYAN.

Belen y Octubre 4, de 1834.

Surveyor General's Office, Translator's Department,
Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 24, 1857.

The foregoing is a correct copy of the original on file in this office.

DAVID. V. WHITING,
Translator.

Surveyor General's Office,
Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 24, 1857.

David V. Whiting, whose signature is attached to the foregoing certificate, is, and was at the time of signing the same, the translator of this office.

WM. PELHAM,
Surveyor General.

No. 2.

Grant.-- Translation.

Territory of New Mexico,)
County of Valencia.)

To His Excellency the Governor and Captain General: Captain Diego de Torres and Antonio de Salazar, and the other signers hereto, before the greatness of your excellency with the greatest proper submission state that, whereas we have large families, and having no convenient lands wherewith to support them, and having examined an uncultivated and vacant tract of land at the point of the Rio Abajo, and being unappropriated, we register the same, and petition for a grant in the royal name of his Majesty (whom may God preserve,) for the purpose of settling thereupon, there being suitable lands for our herds and flocks, which we promise to occupy and settle as required by the royal ordinances. The boundaries of which are: on the east

the Sandia mountain, and on the west the Puerco river; on the north, on both sides of the river, the boundary is the lands of Nicolas de Chaves, and those of the adjoining settlers of our Lady of the Conception, tract of Tomé; and on the south, the place called Phelipe Romero, in a direct line until it intersects the boundaries above mentioned, from east to west. Which your excellency being pleased to grant to us as requested, without injury to any third party having a better right, we will settle thereupon, as aforestated. In view of all which, we humbly pray and request your excellency to be pleased to provide and direct as we request, by doing which we will receive grace and favor; and we swear in due form that this our petition is not done in malice, but for the purpose of overcoming our difficulties.

Diego Torres de Salazar,
Pedro Vigil
Mig'l Salazar,
Juana Teresa Romero,
Lugarda Romero,
Juan Antonio Salazar,
Miguel Salazar,
Pablo Salazar,
Nicolas Salazar,
Manuel Antonio Trugillo,
Maria Torres,
Salvadore Torres,
José Antonio Torres,
Tadeo Torres,
Cayetano Cristobal Torres,
Diego Torres,
Barbara Romero,
Gabriel Romero,
Maria Vigil,
José Trujillo,
Francisco Martin,
Nicolas Martiniano,
Ygnacio Barrera,
Juan Domingo Torres,
José Romero,
José Tenorio,
Juan José de Sandoval,
Francisco Trujillo,
Franco. Hiron,
Cristoval Naranjo,
José Antonio Naranjo,
Bartolomé Torres,
Pedro Romero.

Royal Grant.--In the town of Santa Fé, on the fifteenth day of November, one thousand seven hundred and forty, I, the lieutenant colonel, governor and captain general of this kingdom of New Mexico, Don Domingo Gaspar de Mendoza, having seen the present petition made by the persons therein referred to, should order, and did order, that a grant be made to them of the tract they ask for, in the name of the king, our sovereign, (~~wom~~ may God preserve,) in order that they may settle, cultivate and improve the same for the benefit of themselves, their children, heirs, and successors who may have a better right thereto, without injury to any third party, as they promise in their said petition. Therefore, I order and direct the senior justice of the town of Albuquerque, Don Nicolas de Chaves, to give them the possession referred to, under the condition and terms required in such cases; and there being no doubt of the existence of other royal grants in the vicinity, the deeds and titles of those who adjoin said land are required to be presented for the fulfilment of this new grant, in order that it may be divided with more propriety, for the purpose of avoiding suits and difficulties at the present time as well as in the future, I deem it proper to conform to the forms which are provided. I have so provided, ordered and signed, with my attending witnesses,

acting by appointment in the absence of a royal notary, there being none, and on common paper, there being none other in this kingdom.

DON GASPAR DOMINGO DE MENDOZA.

Antonio de Herrera.
José Terrus.

It is noted in my book of government, on file in the archives of this capitol on the reverse, of page 68. MENDOZA.
Santa Fe, January 25, 1742.

Possession given by Capt Duran y Chaves

At this place of our Lady of Belen, jurisdiction of the town of Albuquerque, on the ninth day of the month of December, of the year one thousand seven hundred and forty, I, Captain Don Nicolas Duran y Chaves, senior justice and war captain of said town and jurisdiction, by virtue of the decree of Lieutenant Colonel Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, governor and captain general of this kingdom, promulgated on the fifteenth of November last past, wherein I am directed to proceed to give royal possession to Captain Diego de Torres, as the representative of all the persons mentioned and signed in the foregoing petition; according to the tenor of their petition, a grant is made to them in the name of his Majesty, which decree was published to those adjoining said lands by my order, and there being no objection made to the petition, I proceeded to give possession. Said lands being bounded on the north by those of Captain Don Nicolas Duran y Chaves; on the south, fronting the foundation of the house of Phelipe Romero; on the west, the Puerco river; that portion on the opposite side of the river, with the boundary of the settlers of the pure and limpid conception, and on the east by the Sandia mountains, and on the south by the ruins and walls of the house of the aforesaid Phelipe Romero; and having examined said boundaries with three attending and instrumental witnesses according to law, I took the aforesaid Torres by the hand and walked with him over the lands, and he cried in a loud voice, pulled up grass, threw stones, and gave other manifestations which are made and provided in such cases, receiving this possession in the name of his Majesty, quietly and peaceably, with the same boundaries contained in his petition; whereon I directed perpetual landmarks to be established, giving him said lands free and with general pastures, water, watering places, timber, uses and customs, in order that he, his children, heirs and successors, may enjoy the same without opposition, and this royal possession to be evidence of a sufficient title, and by virtue of which he shall enjoy the same as afore stated, and in order that it may so appear, I placed it on record. Bernabi Baca, Ballazar Baca, and those in my attendance being instrumental witnesses, who signed with me as acting judge, on the present common paper, there being none stamped in these parts. Before me, and as acting judge.

pulled up grass

NICOLAS DE CHAVES.

Attending:
Jose Miguel Alvarez de Castillo.
Guillermo Saavedra.

5

In the town of Santa Fé, one thousand seven hundred and forty-two, I, Lieutenant Colonel Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, governor and captain general of this said kingdom, by his Majesty, (whom may God preserve,) state that, having been informed that several residents included in this grant, which was made by me, said lieutenant colonel, in the name of the king, our sovereign, Captain Diego Torres, being their representative, I should and did order that all such persons who have not occupied such grant and tract, or who shall not occupy the same within the space of thirty days, to be counted from the day of the date hereof, shall be considered as having forfeited their right to the grant and lands to which they would have a right had they occupied the same, and that the holders of land that are hereby forfeited, if they do not comply with what has been ordered, their lands shall be considered as vacant, or they shall be given to such persons as occupy them, in compliance with the royal decrees in reference to the settlement and cultivation of lands; and I have so provided, ordered, and signed with those in my attendance, in the customary manner, and on the present paper, there being none other, to which I certify.

DON GASPAR DOMINGO DE MENDOZA.

Witnesses:
Salvador Manuel.
Antonio Giole.

The above is a true, legal copy from the original on file in the archives at Santa Fe, in a government book for the year 1740 and upwards, on the reverse of page sixty-eight.

LUIS DIAZ Y LUJAN.

Belen, October 4, 1834.

Territory of New Mexico,)
County of Valencia.)

I, J. A. Bazan, a justice of the peace within and for the county of Valencia, certify in due form that the foregoing document, purporting to be the grant of Belen, was found in the records of this office of the precinct of Belen, on this 12th day of January, A. D. 1857; and in testimony thereof, copies alike to the grant of Belen are, one at Manzana and the other at Sabinal.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto affixed my hand and rubric, in my office, at the precinct of Belen, on said day, month, and year.

J. A. BAZAN, [rubric]
Justice of the Peace.

Surveyor General's Office, Translator's Department,
Santa Fé, New Mexico, March 7, 1857.

The foregoing is a correct translation of the original on file in this office.

DAVID V. WHITING, Translator.

Surveyor General's Office,
Santa Fé, New Mexico, September 27, 1857.

The foregoing is a true copy of the original on file in this office.

WM. PELHAM
Surveyor General.

No. 3.

Notice.

United States of America,)
Territory of New Mexico.)

Joachim A. Bassan, Juan Cruz Baca, Antonio José Castillo, and Antonio Chaves, citizens of the United States and residents of the county of Valencia, Territory of New Mexico, on behalf of themselves and the settlers and residents of the town of Belen, represent that the original settlers of said town, under whom your petitioners hold, became possessed of the said lands appertaining to said town by virtue of a grant made to Diego de Torres de Salazar, Pedro Vigil, and Miguel Salazar, and thirty-two other persons, as original settlers, by Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, governor and captain general of the department of New Mexico, on the 15th day of _____, A. D. 1740, which will more fully appear by reference to copy of documents, herewith filed. Said land, as appears by said deed of grant, is bounded as follows: On the east by the edge of the mountain of Sandia; on the west by the river Puecco [sic]; on the north, on each side of the Rio del Norte, by the lands of Nicolas de Chaves and the lands of the settlers of Tomé; and on the south, the place called _____ Romero, running in a straight line until it crosses the line from east to west.

Your petitioners further state that they cannot show the quantity of land claimed, except so far as the same is set forth in the well known landmarks bounding said land, nor can they furnish a map or plat of survey of the same, as no survey has ever been made. Your petitioners state that they, and those under whom they hold, have been in peaceable possession after since the execution of said deed of grant, and the time they were put in possession, which will appear by said copies herewith filed; and that your petitioners know of no adverse claim to said lands. For confirmation of the grant, they refer your honor to the laws, usages, and customs of Spain and Mexico in force at the date of said grant.

M. ASHURST,
Pro Petitioners.

The Surveyor General of New Mexico.

Surveyor General's Office,
Santa Fé, New Mexico, September 27, 1857.

The foregoing is a true copy of the original on file in this office.

WM. PELHAM,
Surveyor General.

No. 4

Testimony.

Jose Annijo, being duly sworn, answered to the following interrogatories propounded to him:

Question. Where do you reside?
Answer. In the town of Sabinal, county of Socorro.
Question. Do you know the town of Belen?
Answer. I do.
Question. How many years do you know the town of Belen to have been in existence?
Answer. Since I was born.
Question. How old are you?
Answer. I am sixty-six years of age.
Question. Was the town in existence prior to the 6th of August, 1846?
Answer. It was in existence when the United States assumed possession of New Mexico.
Question. Do you know the petitioners to application to the grant of the town of Belen?
Answer. I do. They all reside at Belen.

his
JOSÉ / ANNIJO.
mark

Sworn and subscribed before me, this 8th day of March, 1857.
WM. PELHAM,
Surveyor General.

Lonjinas Diaz sworn:

Question. Where do you reside?
Answer. At Belen, in the county of Valencia.
Question. Do you know the town of Belen?
Answer. I do.
Question. How many years do you know the town of Belen to have been in existence?
Answer. For 26 years.
Question. Was it settled in the year 1846, when the American troops came into the country?
Answer. It was.
Question. Do you know Joaquin Buzan, Juan Cruz Baca, Antonio José Castillo, and Antonio Chaves; and where do they reside?
Answer. I do. They reside in Belen.
Question. Are these men the heirs and legal representatives of the original grantees?
Answer. They are.
Question. How many are the settlers of Belen?
Answer. Three hundred heads of families, more or less.
LONJINAS DIAZ.

Sworn and subscribed before me, this 8th day of March, 1857.

WM. PELHAM,
Surveyor General.

Surveyor General's Office,
Santa Fé, New Mexico, September 27, 1857.

The foregoing is a true copy of the original on file in this office.

WM. PELHAM,
Surveyor General.

No. 5.

Decision.

Town of Belen.

Surveyor General's Office,
Santa Fé, New Mexico, March 8, 1857.

This case was filed on the day of and set for trial on the 8th day of March, 1857.

In the year 1740, Captain Diego de Torres and Antonio de Salazar, for themselves, and in the name of others, petitioned Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, governor and captain general of New Mexico, for a grant to a tract of land, in what is now the county of Valencia, with the boundaries therein set forth.

On the 9th day of November, 1740, Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, governor and captain general as aforesaid, granted the land in conformity with the request of the petitioners, and directed Nicolas Duran yChaves, senior justice and war captain of the town of Albuquerque and its jurisdiction, to place the parties in possession of the land petitioned for, in accordance with the provisions of the royal ordinances in such cases made and provided, which was accordingly done on the 9th December, 1740.

The documents acted upon by this office are copies of the originals deposited in the archives at Santa Fé, and duly certified by the proper officer.

The testimony taken in the case proves the town to have been in existence when the United States obtained possession of the Territory, and the grant and proceedings had thereon, being in conformity with the laws, usages and customs of the government of Spain in force at that time, the grant to the aforesaid town of Belen is confirmed, and transmitted for the action of Congress in the premises.

WM. PELHAM,
Surveyor General.

Surveyor General's Office,
Santa Fé, New Mexico, September 26, 1857.

The foregoing is a true copy of the original on file in this office.

WM. PELHAM,
Surveyor General.

los propios Auxilios q.e le en[illegible] [illegible]ados por su Alc.
[illegible]or antes [illegible]emente:
con el nuevo Plan que se [illegible]ece; prev[illegible]
en nada contribuyan para la [illegible] de la
Dove pr[illegible]e por el Ve[illegible]
Distrito, [illegible]
el año proximo pasado de noven[illegible]

Para que llegue á noticia [illegible] y sepa cada uno
de la Feligresia. Spiritual de [illegible] publicara este
en la forma y Parages acos[illegible]
Exemplares de el, se fixaran, [illegible]
querque, otro en el del Pueblo [illegible]
de los Bacas en el puesto de [illegible] el Vl[illegible]
Jome: Cuydando el Alc. mayor [illegible]
Daxime el passe correspondiente [illegible]

Santa Fé 18. de Febrero de [illegible]

New Mexico Archives
Museum of New Mexbo
Sec. 1226

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1791
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1791-

Celebro mucho la noticia que me dà Vm. con fhà de 1.º de Julio ultimo relativa al ataque que dieron los Isleños à los Capachos Nataqès que cayeron sobre el Pueblo de Fomè, cuyo aviso dió el Capitan Tarchelna- te que està de paz: apruebo en todas sus partes las providencias que tomò Vm para que asi se verificase, y tambien que depusiese de su Empleo, y castigase como merecia àl Teniente de aquel Pueblo por la omision en que incurrió.

Dios gûe. à Vm. m.s a.s Mexico 23 de Agosto de 1791.

El Conde de Revilla Gigedo

Sr. Gov.r del
Sr. Ruyno de [illegible]

Secretaria

New Mexico Archives
Museum of New Mexico
Rec. 1226

1226

1793.

Lorcha [illegible] de mi mas precisa oblig.ª atender al cuidado de los Individuos de esta Expn. que el Rey me [illegible] no siendo posible que los Comisionados de los Españoles q.e corren la frontera de los EE.UU. Septentrionales de Albuquerque, y Pueblo de la Isleta, se hallen servidos segun, tanto [illegible] el considerable numero de Gentiles [illegible] dictamen q.e [illegible] mas á otras Poblaciones [illegible] sion en el Paxaido de Belem, [illegible] Espiritual desde Cabeza hta [illegible] Isleta inclusive; y tambien de la otra parte del [illegible] Rio, hasta Valencia inclusive. Advirtiendo que los [illegible] dados en la Plaza de Belem, serán acompañados [illegible] de ningun Parroq.; pero precisam.te obligados á la Fabrica, y Ornamentos de la nueva Yglesia, [illegible] beneficiados que los demas.

El Pueblo del Pueblo de la Isleta correrá [illegible] con los de los Gentiles, y la de los Padillas.

El de la Villa de Albuquerque correrá con toda su Feligresia como está en el dia, excepto las Plazas de Valencia, S.n Fern.do y Tomé, y Pueblo de Sefraguar en algun modo este Pedido de Limosnas mientras el Pueblo de Pajarito.

Es publica la desgracia de la caida de la Villa de Albuquerque, y tambien la necesidad urgentisima de levantarla, y la poca facultad que reside en los que actualm.te quedan del Paroquiano en ella: Por tanto arreglandome á la mas correcta equidad mando q.e el Vecindario de Valencia, S.n Fern.do y Tomé, que ahora se segregan de ella, concurra como antes á la misma. Hasta nuevo Edicto

NEW MEXICO
Commission of Public Records
at the State Records Center and Archives
Your Access to Public Information

December 2, 2016

Kenneth Gibson
1200 W. Chavez Ave.
Belen, NM 87002

RE: State Archives Request No. 2017-147

Dear Mr. Gibson:

You requested information about the date of the founding of the town of Belen.
I've enclosed two articles from the Office of the State Historian's website about the founding of Belen.

Nov. 15, 1740 is the date that Don Gaspar Dominguez de Mendoza, Governor and Captain General of New Mexico, approved the petition from Diego de Torres and Antonio Salazar for a land grant to be known as Nuestra Senora de Belen. I found this information on page 34 of the book *The Place Names of New Mexico* by Robert Julyan, published by UNM Press in Albuquerque in 1996.

The actual Belen Grant documents are in the Spanish Archives of New Mexico Series 1, Land Records, Surveyor General # 13, Town of Belen Grant at the State Archives. They are viewable here at the Archives on microfilm, or at the Center for Southwest Research at the University of New Mexico's Zimmerman Library.

These documents have been digitized and are also viewable on line via www.Ancestry.com. On the Ancestry website, they are in the collection "New Mexico, Land Records of New Spain, 1692-1846, Land Grant Case Files, Serial 10305, SG Reports 9 – 13, images 377 – 408." I've made photocopies of what I believe are the pages relevant to your question, pages 377-388 and page 397. The cost for the 13 pages at $0.25 per page comes to $3.25 for the photocopies, plus $1.22 for shipping and handling. The total amount due is $4.47. Please send a check or money order written payable to "NMCPR" for New Mexico Commission of Public Records (the State Archives is a Division of the NMCPR).

Best wishes,

SM

Sibel Melik
Senior Archivist
State Archives of New Mexico / New Mexico Commission of Public Records
1205 Camino Carlos Rey
Santa Fe, NM 87507
(505) 476-7959

Enclosures: 2

Robert J. Tórrez, *Historian/Chair* | Hon. Hector Balderas, *Attorney General* | Hon. Tim Keller, *State Auditor* | Hon. Brad Winter, *Secretary of State*
Jeff Pappas, *Department of Cultural Affairs* | Edwynn Burckle, *General Services Department* | Lynne S. Rhys, *State Law Librarian*

New Mexico Office of the State Historian

Belen

In his 1777 reminiscences, Juan Candelaria recalled that "Nuestra Señora de Belen" was founded in 1741 with the help of genízaro Indians (Armijo 1929:280-281). On May 19, 1760 the houses of the settlement of Belén on the other side of the Río Grande came into Bishop Tamarón's view, and from there on 171 the countryside was covered by great poplar groves. Tamarón was received by the alcalde of Tomé with the citizens of his town, of Belén and of Isleta (Adams 1953:201). On August 14, 1766 Lafora commented that this settlement of 38 genízaro and Spanish families lay across the Río Grande from Tomé in a well-cultivated and pastured area (Alessio Robles 1939:96). On 14 November 1780, Juan Bautista de Anza left the pueblo near Valencia and traveled six leagues south, stopping for the night opposite the pueblo of Belen. It was five leagues further south to Las Nutrias (Thomas 1932:198). In December 1846, George Rutledge Gibson and Doniphan's army passed through Belen while following the west bank of the Río Grande from Alburquerque to Valverde (Bieber 1935:284-287). Given that most colonial traffic passed along the east bank of the Río Grande, the most used caravan paraje would have been opposite the town of Belén.

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http://newmexicohistory.org/people/belen-grant

(From the website of the Office of the State Historian)

Belen Grant

by J. J. Bowden

The common combination of large families and insufficient land prompted a group of thirty-four colonists from Santa Cruz, led by Captain Diego de Torres, to petition Governor Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza for a grant covering a choice tract of vacant land[1] located on both sides of the Rio Grande and described as being:

Bounded on the north, by the lands of Nicolas de Chaves and the Town of Tome; on the east, by the Sandia Mountains; on the south, by the ruins of the hacienda of Felipe Romero; and on the west, by the Rio Puerco.

Since the Spanish government was anxious to have the Rio Abajo Area resettled, Governor Mendoza promptly acted upon the request. By an instrument entitled "Royal Grant" dated November 15, 1740, he ordered that the grant be made to the parties named in the petition. Recognizing that other grants previously had been made in the area, the governor directed the Senior Alcalde and War Captain of Albuquerque, Nicolas Duran of Chaves, to investigate and satisfy himself that the new concession would not conflict with the vested rights of any third party. If the alcalde determined that the Belen Grant did not conflict with any of the senior grants, then he was to place the grantees in legal possession of the lands embraced within the boundaries described in their petition. On December 9, 1740, Alcalde Duran reported that he had given notice to the adjoining landowners of the issuance of this grant in accordance with the governor's instructions and haying received no protests, he performed the ceremonies necessary to place the grantees in possession of the grant. Since a number of the grantees failed to promptly settle upon the grant as they had agreed, Governor Mendoza issued an order on July 20, 1742, which provided that any grantee who had not settled upon the grant by August 19, 1742, would forfeit all rights under the concession.[2]

In order to protect their settlement from the Indians, the inhabitants of Belen formed a local militia of one hundred men. The militiamen were required to furnish their own horses, arms and equipment, but proved so effective that a large rancheria of Jicarillas which had posed a threat to the new community was finally abandoned by the Indians, who moved to the Anton Chico Area. As early as 1760, Belen was considered as a military outpost or quasi-presidio.[3] By 1793,

Belen had achieved the status of a partido. When the United States acquired New Mexico, Belen was one of the most important towns in the Rio Abajo Area.

On January 26, 1857, Attorney N. Ashurst filed a petition on behalf of all the residents of the Belen Grant in the Surveyor General's office, requesting the confirmation of the grant. After investigating the validity of the claim, Surveyor General William Pelham rendered a decision dated March 8, 1857, wherein he recommended that the Belen Grant be confirmed by Congress.[4] Based upon the Surveyor General's favorable report, Congress passed the Act of December 22, 1858, which confirmed, among other grants, the Belen Grant.[5]

A preliminary survey of the grant was made in 1859, by Deputy Surveyor John W. Garretson, which showed that the grant embraced 194,663.75 acres. A patent was issued to the Town of Belen and its successors and assigns on April 28, 1871, for all of the lands described in Garretson's survey.[6] Since the patenting of the grant, it has been managed and controlled by the Board of Trustees of the Belen Grant, a corporation organized and existing under the general laws of the State of New Mexico.

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[1] There is a question as to whether or not the lands covered by the Belen Grant were actually vacant at the time Captain Torres and the other grantees filed their petition. In 1746, Antonio Casados and Luis Quintana brought a suit before the Governor of New Mexico against the owners of the Belen Grant, claiming that the lands at Belen were the property of an Indian pueblo which had been formed for the Genízaros. The Genízaros were Christianized Indians who had been captured or kidnapped by hostile Indians but were later ransomed. The Governor forwarded the problem to the Viceroy for his decision. Nothing seems to have come of this litigation and the Genízaros who were living on the grant were gradually absorbed into the community. Archive No. 183 (Mss., Records of the A.N.M.).

[2] H. R. Report No. 321, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., 203-206 (1860).

[3] Stanley, The Belen Story. 6 (1962)

[4]The Town of Belen Grant, No. 13 (Mss., Records of the S.G.N.M.).

[5] An Act to Confirm the Land Claims of Certain Pueblos and Towns in the Territory of New Mexico, Chap. 5, 11 Stat. 374 (1858).

[6] 34 Deed Records 462 (Mss., Records of the County Clerk's office. Socorro, New Mexico)

NO. 113 1768

PROCEEDINGS

Grantees of the Belen tract vs
Pedro Yturbieta for sale of land
to Fernando Chaves.

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New Mexico State Archives

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Spanish Archives of New Mexico Series I Land Records (SANM I)
Surveyor General (SG) # 13, "Town of Belen Grant"
[This is a copy of the original documents + translation + finding, but not the entire 32 p. case file.]

SG #13
TOWN OF BELEN GRANT
F43

Courtesy of the State Archives of New Mexico, a division of the NM Commission of Public Records.

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Son. Gov.or y Cap.n Gen.l = El Capitan Diego de Torres y Sal.e de Salazar, y los demas q.e abajo firmamos, ante la grandeza de V. S. con el mayor rendim.to devido decimos: que por q.to no hallamos con crecidas familias, y no tenemos tierras comodas p.a poderlas mantener, y tener vivir en sitio yermo de poblado, y como tal pidamos en el puerto del Rio-Abaxo, le registramos y pedimos de merced en el Real nombre de V. Mag.d q.D.G. y p.a poblarnos en él, habiendo tierras de labores las q.e fueren comodas p.a ello, y en las q.es no, poder tener en que pastar nros. ganados mayores y menores; el q.e obteniendo mantener y poblar, leg.n pide, ordenanzas previenen: cuyos linderos son, p.r la p.te del oriente, la Sierra de Sandoval, y p.r el poniente el Rio-grande: por el Norte, de una y otra banda del Rio, sonlis.os las tierras de Nicolas de Chaves, y la de los vecinos poblad.es de V. S. de la Concepc.n sitio de Jome; y p.r el Sur, el Paraje que llaman de Hupe. Romero, linea recta hasta topar con los lind.os q.e dho expresados de oriente a poniente. Lo que, libro V. S. devido de hacerno la merced q.e pedimos, sin perjuicio de tercero q.e pueda tener mejor drō. poblaremos como dho. es; pues p.a todo lo cual, a V. S. pedimos y suplicamos rendidam.te sea muy servido de proveher y mandar como llevamos pedido, que en ello recibiremos merced y buena obra. y Juramos en devida forma q.e este mro. escrito no es de malicia alguna Lino p.r socorrer mras. necesidades. = Diego de Torres = Ant.o de Salazar = Pedro Vigil = Mig.l Salazar = Juana Perea Romero = Lugarda Romero = Juan Ant.o Salazar = Mig.l Salazar = Pablo Salazar = Nicolas Salazar = Man.l Ant.o Trujillo = M.a Torres = Salvador Torres = Domgo Ant.o Torres = Isidro Torres = Cayetano = Christoval Torres = Diego Torres = Barb.a Romero = Gabriel Romero = M.a Vigil = Jose Trujillo = Fran.co Martin = Nicolas Martiniano = Ign.o Barrera = Juan Domingo Torres = Jose Romero = Jose Herrera = Juan Jose de Sandoval = Fran.co

Trujillo = Franco Xiron = Christoval Naranjo = Jose Antº Naran
jo = Bñe. Jorge = Pedro Romero = Merced Real
En la villa de Stª Fee. a los quince dias del mes de 9bre
de mil seteco. cuarenta, Yo el Thc. Coronl Govr. y Capn Grāl. de
este Reyno de la Nueva Mexico Dn. Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, visto
el presente escrito pr. los mencionados en él, devia mandar y mandè
se les diese la merced del sitio q. piden en nombre del Rey N. S.
(D. D. G.) pa. q. lo Puebles, Cultiven y beneficien pa. Sí, sus hijos, he-
rederos, Subcesores en qu. mas dé. tengan sin perjuicio de tercero
como lo prometen en su mismo escrito; pr. lo q. ordeno y man-
do al Alc. mayor de la villa de Alburq. D. Nicolas de Chaves le
dé la posesion mencionada con las circunstancias y calidades
q. en tales casos se requieren; con apercivimto q. como no puede
dejar de haver en aquellas inmediaciones otras mercedes reales
en que es neces. q. a la data y señalamto de esta nueva merced
se lleven los instrumtos y papeles de los q. pudieren alindar con
esta; pa. q. con mayor claridad se pueda hacer el repasto de ellos
y divisiones, a fin de q. en lo presente no en lo futuro se formen
pleitos ni discordias: pr. lo q. me parece muy conveniente se
observe la forma que se previene. Asi lo proveí, mandé y firmé
con los testigos de mi assist. actuando pr. recept. a falta de es-
cribano Rl. q. no lo hay, y en papel comun pr. no correr otro en
este Reyno = D. Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza = Antº de Herrera =
= Jose Ferrer ——— Queda anotada en mi libro de govno
que para en el archivo de esta capital a foxas 66 vta. = Stª.
Fee y Nov. 29 de 1742 = Mendoza ——— En este Puesto de
N. S. de Belen, Jurisdicn. de la villa de Alburq. en diez y nueve
dias del mes de Dic. del año de mil seteco. cuarenta, Yo el Capn
Dn. Nicolas Duran y Chaves, Alc. mayor y Capn. a guerra de dha.
villa y Jurisdicn. en virtud del auto del Sor. Thc. Coronel Dn.
Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Govr. y Capn Grāl. de este Reyno pronuncia-
do el quince del pdo. Nobre. del mismo año en q. me manda

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pase y dé, R.l posesion al Cap.n Diego de Torres, en cuyo de todo lo mencionado y firmado en el escrito q.e antecede, p.r el tenor de su pedim.to se le confiere en nombre de su mag.d cuyo auto fue intimado p.r mi ssn. a los vecinos y circunvecinos de dha. traza. en las q.e no hallando ning.a contradic.n sobre lo q.e pide, pasé a dar la posesion, lindando dha. traza. p.r la pte. del Norte con la del Cap.n D.n Nicolas Duran y Chaves, p.r la del Sur, afrontado a la ruina de la casa de dho. Romero: Por el Poniente el Rio Fuerte los Pobladores en la Pura y limpia Concep.n y p.r el oriente con la sierra de Sandia, y p.r el Sur con paseres y ruinas de dha. casa del expresado Felipe Romero. y haviendo reconocido dho. linderos con tres testigos de assist.a e instrumentales Cap.n D.n Jph. de la mano al referido Torres, lo pasee p.r sus tapias. y dio voces en semejante caso requiriendo, perviriendo esta posesion en nombre de su Mag.d quieta y pacifica.m.te con los mismos lind.s q.e expresa su petic.n; en los cuales mandé le pusiesen pleapartos, agua, abrevaderos, montes, usos y costumbres, p.r q.e la goze p.r sí, sus hijos, herederos y subcesores, sin perjuicio ninguno. y esta Real posesion, le sea de bastante titulo, y p.r ella los goze como dho. es; pues p.r q.e consta lo pase p.r dho. assistiendo testigos instrumentales Bernabe Baca y Baltasar Baca, y los de mi assist.a q.e lo firmaron con migo actuando como Juez receptor en el presente papel comun p.r no correr en esta parte el sello. Ante mi, y como Juez receptor, Nicolas de chaves. = De assist.a = D.r Mig.l Albares del castillo = De assist.a = Guillermo Sabedra

En la villa de Sta. Fee, Capital de este Reyno de N. Mexico, a los veinte dias del mes de Julio de mil setec.tos cuarenta y dos, Yo el Mr.o coronel D. Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Gov.r y cap.n Gen.l de este Nuev. Reyno

no p.r su Mag.d [q.D.G.] Digo que hallandome informado q.e
diferentes vecinos que se incluyen en la presente merced que
se les hizo p.r mi dho. Hte. coron.l en nombre del Rey N.S.; y
p.r cavesa de ella el Cap.n Diego Josse, devia mandar y mande
que todas las personas que no han ocupado dha. merced y
puesto, ni fueren a ocuparla en el termino de Veinta
dias q.e deveran contarse desde el dia de la fha. sales da p.r
excluidos a la merced y Trras. q.e pudieran tener dho. a ellas si las
hubieren havitado: y que lo pertenecientes de tras. a estos q.e se
excluyan si no cumplen con lo ordenado se darán p.r vacantes o se
repartiran en las personas q.e las havitan devriendo cumplir con
lo que citan las leyes reales sobre poblar y cultivar las Trras: y
asi lo proveí, mande y firmé con los de mi aten.t en la forma
acostumbrada, y en el presente papel p.r no haver otro q.e doy fe.
= D. Gaspar Domingo = Attendo = Esta y [illegible] antes y ant.
y [illegible]

Es traslado fiel y legal copia legalizada de la original
que se halla en el Archivo de Sta. Fee en un libro de
Reales Ordenes que principia a fojas treinta y ocho v.to
y termina a la foja trescientos sesenta y cuatro
no a los [illegible]

Fielato 4 [illegible]

Asiento in Volumen I Documentos
claims Adjudicated
General Land Office
3644, 365[illegible]

Nº 66 de 1834

Luis Díaz de Leon

United States of America
Territory of New Mexico }

To the Surveyor General
of New Mexico

Joachin A Baca. Juan Chy Baca
Antonio Jose Castillo Antonio
Chavis ——— Citizens of the
United States and residents of the
County of Valencia Territory of New
Mexico for behalf of themselves and
the settlers and residents of the Town
of Belen. represent that the original
Settlers of said Town under whom
your petitioners hold, became possessed
of the said lands appertaining to
said Town by virtue of a grant
made to Diego de Torres de Salazar.
Pedro Vigil, and Miguel Salazar,
and thirty two other persons as
original settlers, by Gaspar
Domingo de Mendoza Gov. and
Captain General of the Department
of New Mexico on the 15th day
of A.D. 1740, which title
deeds fully appear by reference
to copy of Documents herewith
filed, Said land as appears
by said Deed of grant is bounded
as follows. On the East by the
edge of the mountain of Sandia
on the West by the River Puerco
on the North on each side of
the Rio Del Norte by the lands of

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of Nicolas de Chaves and the
Lands of the Settlers of Tome,
one on the South the Palace called
Romero running in a Westerly
line until it crosses the line
from east to West.

Your Petitioners
further state that they cannot
show the quantity of land claimed
except so far as the same is set
forth in the well known land
marks, bounding said land nor
can they furnish a maps or plats
of Survey of the same as no
Survey has ever been made
Your Petitioners state that they
and those under whom they
hold, have been in peaceable
possession ever since the execution
of said deed of grant and the
~~proper~~ time they were put in
possession, which will appear
by said copies herewith filed
and that Your Petitioners know
of no adverse claim to said
Lands. For confirmation of the
Grant they refer Your Honor
to the laws usages and Customs
of Spain & Mexico in force
at the date of said Grant
M. Aldrich
Pro Petitioners

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No 45

Joseph Hanson.
Juan Cruz Baca.
and others,
Petition for
Confirmation of
Grants to the
Town of Belen,

Recorded in Volume I of
Land Claims Records
in Surveyor Generals Office
page 369.

Wm. J. Miller,
Translator.

Territory of New Mexico
County of Valencia "Copy"

To His Excellency the Governor and Capitain General — Captain Diego de Torres and Antonio de Salazar, and the other signers hereto, before the greatness of Your Excellency with the greatest proper submission state that whereas we have large families and having no convenient lands wherewith to support them and having examined an uncultivated and vacant tract of land, at the point of the Rio Abajo, and being unappropriated, we register the same and petition for a grant in the Royal name of His Majesty (whom may God preserve) ~~under~~ for the purpose of settling thereupon there being suitable land for cultivation and such as is not will answer for pasture grounds for our herds and flocks. Which we promise to occupy and settle as required by the Royal Ordinances. The boundaries of which are, On the East the Sandia Mountains, and on the West, the Puerco River; On the North, on both sides of the river the boundary is the lands of Nicolas de Chaves, and those of the adjoining settlers of Tomé, and on the South the place called Phelipe Romero; in a direct line until it intersects the boundaries ~~above~~ above mentioned from East to West, Which, Your Excellency being pleased to grant to us as requested, without injury to any third party having a better right, we will settle thereupon as above stated: In view of all which we humbly pray and request Your Excellency to be pleased to provide and direct as we request by doing which we will receive grace and favor. And we swear in due form that this our petition is not done in malice but for the purpose of overcoming our difficulties. Signed Diego Torres de Salazar, Pedro Vigil, Miguel Salazar, Juana Teresa Romero, Segunda Romero, Juan Antonio Salazar, Miguel

Salazar, Pablo Salazar, Nicolas Salazar, Manuel Antonio Trujillo, Maria Torres, Salvador Torres, José Antonio Torres, Pedro Torres, Cayetano, Cristobal Torres, Diego Torres, Barbara Romero, Gabriel Romero, Maria Vigil, Jose Trujillo, Francisco Martin, Nicolas Martiniano, Ygnacio Barrera, Juan Domingo Torres, José Romero, Jose Benorio, Juan José de Sandoval, Francisco Trujillo, Franco Giron, Cristoval Naranjo, José Antonio Naranjo, Bartolome Torres, Pedro Romero

Royal Grant = In the town of Santa Fé on the fifteenth day of November One thousand seven and forty 8 the Lieutenant Colonel, Governor & Captain General of this Kingdom of New Mexico, Don Domingo Gaspar de Mendoza having seen the present petition made by the persons therein referred to, should order and did order that a grant be made to them of the tracts they ask for, in the name of the King, our Sovereign (Whom may God preserve) in order that they may settle cultivate and improve the same for the benefit of themselves, their children, heirs, and successors who may have a better right thereto without injury to any third party, as they promise in their said petition; Therefore I order and direct the Senior Justice of the Town of Albuquerque Don Nicolas de Chaves to give them the possession referred to under the conditions and terms required in such cases, and there being no doubt of the existence of other royal grants in the vecinity, the deeds and titles of those who adjoin, said land are required to be presented on the fulfillment of this new grant in order that it may be divided with more propriety, for the purpose of avoiding doubts and difficulties at the present time as well as in the future I deem it proper to conform to the forms which are provided. I have so provided, ordered, and signed, with my attending witnesses

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Acting by appointment in the absence of a Royal Notary, there being none, and on common paper there being none other in this Kingdom)

Signed Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza

Ante de Herrera — Jose Ferris

It is noted in my book of Government, on file in the Archives of this Capital on the reverse of page 68. Santa Fé January 25th 1742. Diez doze.

At this place of Our Lady of Belen, Jurisdiction of the Town of Albuquerque on the Ninth day of the Month of ~~January~~ December of the year One thousand Seven hundred and forty 2 Captain Don Nicolas Duran y Chaves Senior Justice and War Captain of said town and jurisdiction by virtue of the decree of Lieutenant Colonel Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza Governor and Captain General of this Kingdom, ~~that~~ promulgated on the fifteenth of November last past, wherein I am directed to proceed to give royal possession to Captain Diego de Torres as the representative of all the persons mentioned and signed in the foregoing petition. According to the tenor of their petition a grant is made to them in the name of His Majesty, which decree was published to those adjoining said lands, by my order and there being no objection made to the petition I proceeded to give possession. Said lands being bounded on the North by those of Captain Don Nicolas Duranny Chaves, on the South, fronting the foundation of the House of Phelipe Romero; On the West, the Puerco River; that portion on the opposite side of the River, ~~is bo~~ with the boundary of the Settlers of the Pure and Immaculate Conception, and on the East by the Sandia Mountains

and on the South by the ruins and walls of the house of the aforesaid, Phelipe Romero, and having examined said boundaries with three adjoining and instrumental witnesses according to law I put the aforesaid Torres by the hand and walked with him over his lands, and he cried in a loud voice, pulled up grass, threw stones and made other manifestations which are usual and provided in such cases, receiving this possession in the name of His Majesty, quietly, and peaceably, with the same boundaries and manner he pleases, whereon I placed perpetual land marks to be established, giving him said lands free and with general pastures, water, adjacent places, timber and outlets in order that he, his children, heirs and successors may enjoy the same without opposition, and this Royal possession to be evidence of a sufficient title, and by virtue of which he shall enjoy the same as aforestated, and in order that it may do appear, I placed at the record, Bernabé Baca, Gallegos Baca and those in my attendance, being instrumental witnesses, who signed with me an asterisk proof on the present common paper, that being none stamped in these parts. Before me—and Asterisk Judge, (Signed) Faustin de Chaves (Attending Signed) José Miguel Abreu y Castillo Attending (Signed) Guillermo Sanchez.

In the town of Santa Fé, One thousand seven hundred and forty two: I Lieutenant Colonel Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza Governor and Captain General of this said Kingdom by His Majesty, (whom may God preserve) state that having been informed that several residents included in this grant which was made by me said Lieutenant Colonel in the

Town of Belen

Decision

This case was set for trial on the 8th day of March 1857

In the year 1740 Captain Bruno de Torres and Antonio de Salazar petitioned for Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza Governor and Captain General of New Mexico ~~petitioned~~ for a grant of a tract of land in what is now the County of Valencia, with the boundaries therein contained

On the ninth day of November 1740 said Governor & Captain General, Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza granted the land in conformity with the request of the petitioners and directed Nicolas Durany Chaves Senior Justice and War Captain of the town of Albuquerque and its jurisdiction to place the parties in possession of the land petitioned for according to the provisions of the Royal Ordinances in such cases made and provided, which was accordingly done on the twenty day of December 1740.

The documents acted upon are copies of the originals in the archives of Santa Fé duly certified.

The testimony taken in the case shows the town to have been in existence when the United States obtained possession of the Territory and the grant and proceedings had thereon being in conformity with the usage & customs of the government of Spain in force at that time, the grant to the aforesaid town of Belen is approved and transmitted for the action of Congress in the premises

Surveyor Generals Office
Santa Fé New Mexico
March 8 1857

Wm Pelham
Surveyor General

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NEW MEXICO
Commission of Public Records
at the State Records Center and Archives
Your Access to Public Information

December 2, 2016

Kenneth Gibson
1200 W. Chavez Ave.
Belen, NM 87002

RE: State Archives Request No. 2017-147

Dear Mr. Gibson:

You requested information about the date of the founding of the town of Belen.
I've enclosed two articles from the Office of the State Historian's website about the founding of Belen.

Nov. 15, 1740 is the date that Don Gaspar Dominguez de Mendoza, Governor and Captain General of New Mexico, approved the petition from Diego de Torres and Antonio Salazar for a land grant to be known as Nuestra Senora de Belen. I found this information on page 34 of the book *The Place Names of New Mexico* by Robert Julyan, published by UNM Press in Albuquerque in 1996.

The actual Belen Grant documents are in the Spanish Archives of New Mexico Series 1, Land Records, Surveyor General # 13, Town of Belen Grant at the State Archives. They are viewable here at the Archives on microfilm, or at the Center for Southwest Research at the University of New Mexico's Zimmerman Library.

These documents have been digitized and are also viewable on line via www.Ancestry.com. On the Ancestry website, they are in the collection "New Mexico, Land Records of New Spain, 1692-1846, Land Grant Case Files, Serial 10305, SG Reports 9 – 13, images 377 – 408." I've made photocopies of what I believe are the pages relevant to your question, pages 377-388 and page 397. The cost for the 13 pages at $0.25 per page comes to $3.25 for the photocopies, plus $1.22 for shipping and handling. The total amount due is $4.47. Please send a check or money order written payable to "NMCPR" for New Mexico Commission of Public Records (the State Archives is a Division of the NMCPR).

Best wishes,

SM

Sibel Melik
Senior Archivist
State Archives of New Mexico / New Mexico Commission of Public Records
1205 Camino Carlos Rey
Santa Fe, NM 87507
(505) 476-7959

Enclosures: 2

Robert J. Tórrez *Historian/Chair* | **Hon. Hector Balderas** *Attorney General* | **Hon. Tim Keller** *State Auditor* | **Hon. Brad Winter** *Secretary of State*
Jeff Pappas *Department of Cultural Affairs* | **Edwynn Burckle** *General Services Department* | **Lynne S. Rhys** *State Law Librarian*

New Mexico Office of the State Historian

Belen

In his 1777 reminiscences, Juan Candelaria recalled that "Nuestra Señora de Belen" was founded in 1741 with the help of genízaro Indians (Armijo 1929:280-281). On May 19, 1760 the houses of the settlement of Belén on the other side of the Río Grande came into Bishop Tamarón's view, and from there on 171 the countryside was covered by great poplar groves. Tamarón was received by the alcalde of Tomé with the citizens of his town, of Belén and of Isleta (Adams 1953:201). On August 14, 1766 Lafora commented that this settlement of 38 genízaro and Spanish families lay across the Río Grande from Tomé in a well-cultivated and pastured area (Alessio Robles 1939:96). On 14 November 1780, Juan Bautista de Anza left the pueblo near Valencia and traveled six leagues south, stopping for the night opposite the pueblo of Belen. It was five leagues further south to Las Nutrias (Thomas 1932:198). In December 1846, George Rutledge Gibson and Doniphan's army passed through Belen while following the west bank of the Río Grande from Alburquerque to Valverde (Bieber 1935:284-287). Given that most colonial traffic passed along the east bank of the Río Grande, the most used caravan paraje would have been opposite the town of Belén.

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http://newmexicohistory.org/people/belen-grant

New Mexico History.org

(From the website of the Office of the State Historian)

Belen Grant

by J. J. Bowden

The common combination of large families and insufficient land prompted a group of thirty-four colonists from Santa Cruz, led by Captain Diego de Torres, to petition Governor Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza for a grant covering a choice tract of vacant land[1] located on both sides of the Rio Grande and described as being:

Bounded on the north, by the lands of Nicolas de Chaves and the Town of Tome; on the east, by the Sandia Mountains; on the south, by the ruins of the hacienda of Felipe Romero; and on the west, by the Rio Puerco.

Since the Spanish government was anxious to have the Rio Abajo Area resettled, Governor Mendoza promptly acted upon the request. By an instrument entitled "Royal Grant" dated November 15, 1740, he ordered that the grant be made to the parties named in the petition. Recognizing that other grants previously had been made in the area, the governor directed the Senior Alcalde and War Captain of Albuquerque, Nicolas Duran of Chaves, to investigate and satisfy himself that the new concession would not conflict with the vested rights of any third party. If the alcalde determined that the Belen Grant did not conflict with any of the senior grants, then he was to place the grantees in legal possession of the lands embraced within the boundaries described in their petition. On December 9, 1740, Alcalde Duran reported that he had given notice to the adjoining landowners of the issuance of this grant in accordance with the governor's instructions and haying received no protests, he performed the ceremonies necessary to place the grantees in possession of the grant. Since a number of the grantees failed to promptly settle upon the grant as they had agreed, Governor Mendoza issued an order on July 20, 1742, which provided that any grantee who had not settled upon the grant by August 19, 1742, would forfeit all rights under the concession.[2]

In order to protect their settlement from the Indians, the inhabitants of Belen formed a local militia of one hundred men. The militiamen were required to furnish their own horses, arms and equipment, but proved so effective that a large rancheria of Jicarillas which had posed a threat to the new community was finally abandoned by the Indians, who moved to the Anton Chico Area. As early as 1760, Belen was considered as a military outpost or quasi-presidio.[3] By 1793,

Belen had achieved the status of a partido. When the United States acquired New Mexico, Belen was one of the most important towns in the Rio Abajo Area.

On January 26, 1857, Attorney N. Ashurst filed a petition on behalf of all the residents of the Belen Grant in the Surveyor General's office, requesting the confirmation of the grant. After investigating the validity of the claim, Surveyor General William Pelham rendered a decision dated March 8, 1857, wherein he recommended that the Belen Grant be confirmed by Congress.[4] Based upon the Surveyor General's favorable report, Congress passed the Act of December 22, 1858, which confirmed, among other grants, the Belen Grant.[5]

A preliminary survey of the grant was made in 1859, by Deputy Surveyor John W. Garretson, which showed that the grant embraced 194,663.75 acres. A patent was issued to the Town of Belen and its successors and assigns on April 28, 1871, for all of the lands described in Garretson's survey.[6] Since the patenting of the grant, it has been managed and controlled by the Board of Trustees of the Belen Grant, a corporation organized and existing under the general laws of the State of New Mexico.

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[1] There is a question as to whether or not the lands covered by the Belen Grant were actually vacant at the time Captain Torres and the other grantees filed their petition. In 1746, Antonio Casados and Luis Quintana brought a suit before the Governor of New Mexico against the owners of the Belen Grant, claiming that the lands at Belen were the property of an Indian pueblo which had been formed for the Genízaros. The Genízaros were Christianized Indians who had been captured or kidnapped by hostile Indians but were later ransomed. The Governor forwarded the problem to the Viceroy for his decision. Nothing seems to have come of this litigation and the Genízaros who were living on the grant were gradually absorbed into the community. Archive No. 183 (Mss., Records of the A.N.M.).

[2] H. R. Report No. 321, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., 203-206 (1860).

[3] Stanley, The Belen Story. 6 (1962)

[4]The Town of Belen Grant, No. 13 (Mss., Records of the S.G.N.M.).

[5] An Act to Confirm the Land Claims of Certain Pueblos and Towns in the Territory of New Mexico, Chap. 5, 11 Stat. 374 (1858).

[6] 34 Deed Records 462 (Mss., Records of the County Clerk's office. Socorro, New Mexico)

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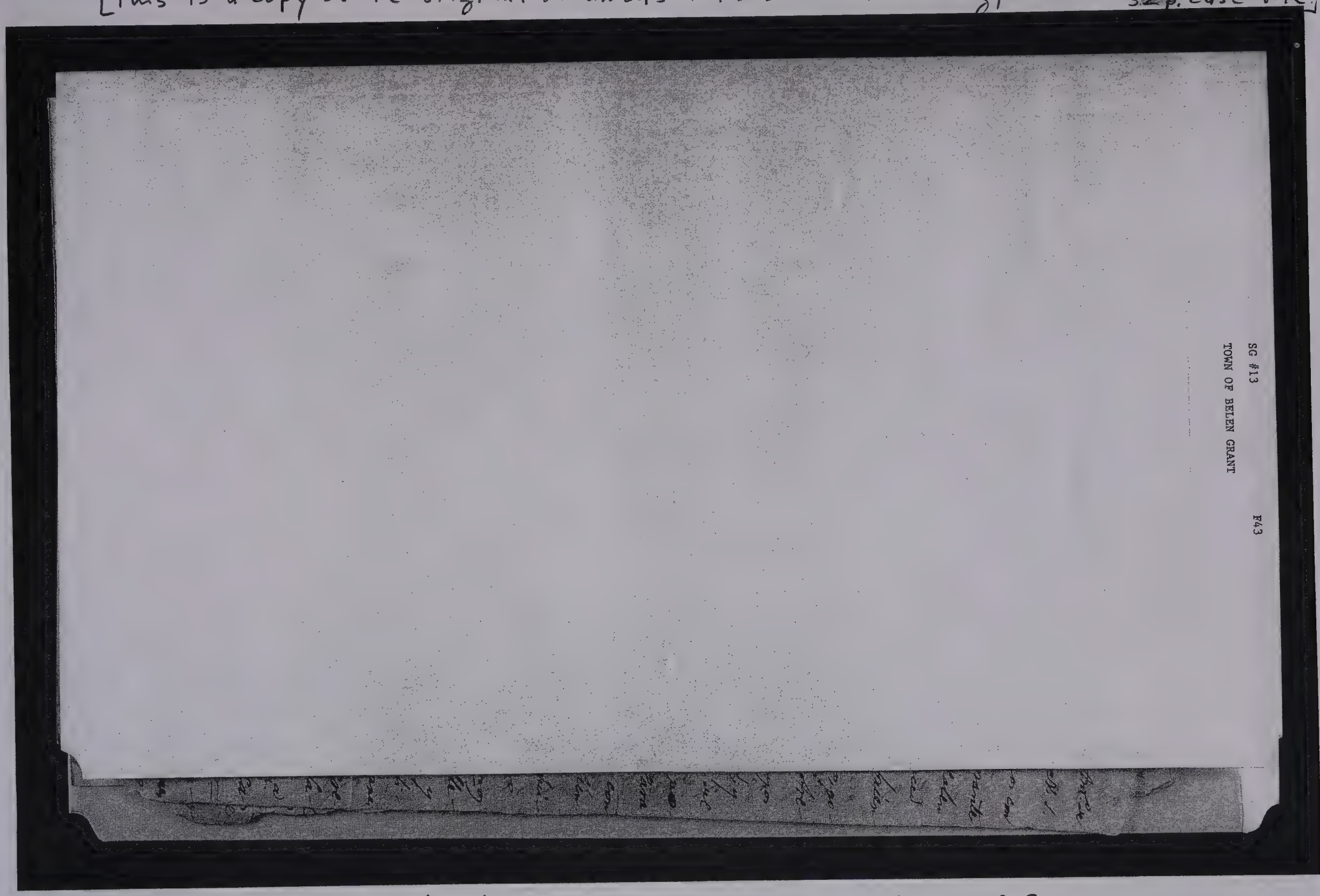
Surveyor General (SG) # 13, "Town of Belen Grant"
[This is a copy of the original documents + translation + finding, but not the entire 32 p. case file.]



Courtesy of the State Archives of New Mexico, a division of the NM Commission of Public Records.

Sor. Gov.or y Cap.n Gen.l = El Capitan Diego de Torres y Ant.o de Salazar, y los demas j.o abajo firmados, ante la grandeza de V. S. con el mayor rendim.to devido decimos: que por q.to no hallamos en crecidas familias, y no tenemos tierras comodas p.a poderlas mantener, y tener vista con sitio yermo y despoblado, y como tal hallemos en el puesto del Rio-Abajo, le registramos y pedimos de merced en el Real nombre de V. Mag.d (q.D.G.) p.a poblarnos en él, habiendo tierras de labores las q.e fueren comodas p.a ello, y en las q.e no, poder tener en que pastar nros. ganados mayores y menores; el q.e dhe cemos mantener y poblar, Ley.s y Reales ordenanzas previenen: cuyos linderos son, p.r la p.te del oriente, la Sierra de Sandia, y p.r el poniente el Rio-grande: por el Norte, de una y otra banda del Rio, continuo.s las tierras de Nicolas de Chaves, y la de los vecinos pobladores de V. S. de la Concepc.n sitio de Pome; y p.r el Sur, el Paraje q.e ynn llaman de Stgo. Romero, y linea recta hta. empezar con los lind.os q.e dho expresados de oriente a poniente. Lo q.e, visto V. S. devido de hacernos la merced q.e pedimos, sin perjuicio de tercero q.e pueda tener mejor dro. poblaremos como dho. es; pues p.a todo lo cual. a V. S. pedimos y suplicamos rendidam.te sea muy servido de proveher y mandar como llevamos pedido, que en ello recibiremos merced y buena obra. y juramos en devida forma q.e este mro. escrito no es de malicia alguna lo firmamos de nros. nombres. = Diego de Torres = Ant.o de Salazar = Leon Vigil = Mig.l Salazar = Juana Josefa Romero = Lugarda Romero = Juan Ant.o Salazar = Mig.l Salazar = Pablo Salazar = Nicolas Salazar = Man.l Ant.o Trujillo = M.a Torres = Salvador Torres = Jose Ant.o Torres = Isidro Torres = Cayetano = Christoval Torres = Diego Torres = Barb.a Romero = = Gabriel Romero = M.a Vigil = Jose Trujillo = Fran.co Martin = Nicolas Martiniano = Ygn.o Barrera = Juan Domingo Torres = Jose Romero = Jose Ignacio = Juan Jose de Sandoval = Fran.co

Trujillo = Franco Xiron = Christoval Narvaez = Jose Mtz. Narvaez = Bme. Jorge = Pedro Romero = Merced Real

En la villa de Sta Fee. a los quince dias del mes de 9bre de mil setecos. cuarenta, Yo el Thc. Coronl. Govr. y Capn. Gral. de este Reyno de la Nueva Mexico D.n Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, visto el presente escrito p.r los mencionados en él, devia mandar y mandè se les diese la merced del sitio q.e piden en nombre del Rey N.S. (D.G.) p.a q.e lo Puebles, cultiven y beneficien p.a Sí, Sus hijos, herederos, Subcesores en q.e mas dho. tengan Sin perjuicio de tercero como lo prometen en Su mismo escrito; p.r lo q.e ordeno y mando al Alc.e mayor de la villa de Alburq.e D. Nicolas de Chaves le dé la posesion mencionada con las circunstancias y calidades q.e en tales casos se requieren; con apercivimto q.e como no puede dejar de haver en aquellas inmediaciones otras mercedes Reales en que es neces.o q.e a la data y Señalamto de esta nueva merced se lleven los instrumtos y papeles de los q.e pudieren alindar con esta; p.a q.e con mayor claridad se pueda hacer el repartimto de ellos y divisiones, a fin de q.e en lo presente no haya en lo futuro se formen pleitos ni discordias: p.r lo q.e me parece muy conveniente se observe la forma que se previene. Asi lo proveí, mandé y firmé con los testigos de mi asist.a actuando p.r recept.a a falta de escribano R.l q.e no lo hay, y en papel comun p.r no correr otro en este Reyno = D. Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza = Ant.o de Herrera = = Jose Ferrer ——— Queda anotada en mi libro de govno que para en el archivo de esta capital a fojas 66 v.ta = Sta. Fee y Enr.o 29 de 1742 = Mendoza —— En este Puesto de N. S. de Belen, Jurisdn. de la villa de Alburq.e en diez y nueve dias del mes de Dic.e del año de mil setecos cuarenta, Yo el Capn D.n Nicolas Duran y Chaves, Alc.e mayor y capn. a guerra de dha villa y Jurisdn. en virtud del auto del Sor. Thc. Coronel D.n Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Govr. y Capn Gral. de este Reyno pronunciado el quince del pp.o Nob.e del mismo año en q.e me manda

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pase y dé, Pl. posesion al Capn. Diego de Torres, en cuyo de todo lo mencionado y firmado en el escrito q. antecede, p.r el tenor de su pedim.to se le dé en nombre de su mag.d cuyo auto fue intimado p.r mi dñ. a los vecinos y circunvecinos de dha. taza. en la q.e no hallando ning.a contradic.n sobre lo q.e pide, pasé a dar la posesion, lindando dhâ. taza. p.r la pte. del Norte con la del Capn. Dn. Nicolas Duran y Chave, p.r la del Sur, afrontado a las ruina de la casa de Jph.e Romero: Por el Poniente el Rio Puerco sobre lo q.e mira a la otra banda del Rio del Norte, con el lind.o de los Pobladores de la Pura y limpia Concepc.n y p.r el oriente con la sierra de Sandia, y p.r el Sur con paderes y ruina de dhâ. casa del expresado Felipe Romero. Y haviendo reconocido dhâ. linderos con tres testigos de asist.a e instrumentales Leg.l de q.e tomé en la mano al referido Torres, lo pasie p.r dha taza. y dio voces en semejante caso requirio, pidiendo esta posesion en nombre de su Mag.d quieta y pacifica.m.te con los mismo lind.s q.e expresa su petic.n; en los cuales mandé le pusiesen perpetuas mohoneras, dandosele dhâs. taza. libre y generalm.te con pasto, agua, abrevaderos, monte, uso y costumbre, p.a q.e la goze p.r si, sus hijos, herederos y sucesores sin perjuicio ninguno. y esta Real posesion, le sea de bastante titulo, y p.r ella la goze como dhô. es; y pues p.a q.e conste lo pase p.r dilig.a siendo testigos instrumentales Bernabe Baca y Baltasar Baca, y los de mi assist.a q.e lo firmaron con migo actuando como Juez receptor en el presente papel comun p.r no coger en esta parte el sellado, Ante mi, y como Juez Receptor, Nicolas de chave. = De assist.a = P.r Alg.l Alcalde del castillo = De assist.a = Guillermo Sabedra =

En la villa de Stâ. Fee, Capital de este Reyno de N. Mexico, a los veinte dias del mes de Julio de mil setec.tos cuarenta y dos, Yo el Thn.te coronel D. Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Gov.r y Cap.n Gen.l de este Dho. Reyno

no p.r su Mag.d (Q.D.G.) Digo que hallandome informado q.e diferentes vecinos que se incluyen en la presente Merced que se les hizo p.r mi dho. Th.e coron.l en nombre del Rey N. S. y p.r cavesa de ella el Cap.n Diego Torre, devia mandar y mande que todas las personas que no han ocupado dha. merced y puesto, ni fueren a ocuparla en el termino de treinta dias q.e deveran contarse desde el dia de la fha. se les da p.r escluidos a la merced y trras. q.e pudieran tener dro. a ellas si las huviesen havitado: y que los pertenecientes de trra. a estos q.e se escluyan si no cumplen con lo ordenado se daran p.r realengas o se repartiran en las personas q.e las havitan deviendo cumplir con lo que citan las leyes reales sobre poblar y cultivar la trras: y asi lo provei, mande y firme con los de mi asist.a en la forma acostumbrada, y en el presente papel p.r no haver otro q.e doy fe. = D. Gaspar Domingo Mendoza = Jorge Salvador Maxine, y Ant. y Tote.

Es traslado que una copia legalisada de la original que se halla en el archivo de Sta. Fee en un libro de Gov.no p.r los entos a ariba a su foxa sesenta y ocho v.ta

66.e 4 de 1834

Geo. Diaz de Luzan

File 402 — A

Recorded in Volume II, Surveyor General's Office, Claims Record, Pages 364, 365, 366, 367 — David J. Miller, Translator — A

United States of America }
Territory of New Mexico }

To the Surveyor General
of New Mexico

Joachin A Bassan. Juan Chy Baca.
Antonio Jose Castillo Antonio
Chavis ——— Citizens of the
United States and residents of the
County of Valencia Territory of New
Mexico for behalf of themselves and
the settlers and residents of the Town
of Belen. Represent that the original
Letters of said Town under whom
your Petitioners hold, became possessed
of the said lands appertaining to
said Town by virtue of a Grant
made to Diego de Torres de Salazar.
Pedro Vigil, and Miguel Salazar,
and thirty two other persons as
original settlers, by Gaspar
Domingo de Mendoza. Gov. and
Capitain General. of the Department
of New Mexico on the 15th day
of A.D. 1740, which title
deeds fully appear by reference
to copy of Documents herewith
filed, Said land as appears
by said Deed of Grant is bounded
as follows. On the East by the
edge of the mountain of Landia
on the West by the River Puerco
on the North on each side of
the Rio Del Norte by the lands of

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of Nicolas de Chaves and the
Islands of the Letters of Jesus,
one on the South the Island called
Romero running in a straight
line until it crosses the line
from East to West.

Your Petitioners
further state that they cannot
show the quantity of land claimed
expects so far as the same is set
forth in the well known land
marks, bounding said land nor
can they furnish a map or plat
of Survey of the same as no
Survey has ever been made
Your Petitioners state that they
and those under whom they
hold claim have been in peaceable
possession after since the execution
of said deed of grant and the
~~Grant~~ time they were put in
possession, which will appear
by said copies herewith filed
and that your Petitioners know
of no adverse claim to said
Islands. For confirmation of the
Grant they refer your honor
to the laws usages and customs
of Spain & America in force
at the date of said Grant
M. Admirals
Pro Petitioners

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No 43

Joachin Bassan,
Juan Cruz Baca,
and others,
Petition for
Confirmation of
Grants to the
Town of Belen,

Recorded in Volume I of
Land Claims Records
in Surveyor Generals Office
page 363.

Lion J. Miller,
Translator.

Territory of New Mexico
County of Valencia "Copy"

To His Excellency the Governor and Captain General & Captain Diego de Torres and Antonio de Salazar, and the other signers hereto, before the greatness of Your Excellency with the greatest proper submission state that whereas we have large families and having no convenient lands wherewith to support them and having examined an uncultivated and vacant tract of land, at the point of the Rio Abajo, and being unappropriated, we register the same and petition for a grant in the Royal name of His Majesty (whom may God preserve) ~~under~~ for the purpose of settling thereupon there being suitable land for cultivation and such as is not will answer for pasture grounds for our herds and flocks. Which we promise to occupy and settle as required by the Royal Ordinances. The boundaries of which are: On the East, the Sandia Mountains; and on the West, the Puerco River; On the North, on both sides of the river the boundary is the lands of Nicolas de Chaves and those of the adjoining settlers of Nuestra Señora de la Concepcion, tract of Tomé, and on the South the place called Phelipe Romero; in a direct line until it intersects the boundaries above mentioned from East to West, Which, Your Excellency being pleased to grant to us as requested, without injury to any third party having a better right, we will settle thereupon as above stated: In view of all which we humbly pray and request Your Excellency to be pleased to provide and direct as we request by doing which we will receive grace and favor. And we swear in due form that this our petition is not done in malice but for the purpose of over coming our difficulties. Signed Diego Torres de Salazar, Pedro Vigil, Miguel Salazar, Juana Teresa Romero, Segunda Romero, Juan Antonio Salazar, Miguel

Salazar, Pablo Salazar, Nicolas Salazar, Manuel Antonio Trujillo. Maria Torres, Salvador Torres, José Antonio Torres, Pedro Torres, Gaytano, Cristobal Torres, Diego Torres, Barbara Romero, Gabriel Romero, Maria Vigil, Jose Trujillo. Francisco Martin, Nicolas Martiniano. Ygnacio Barrera, Juan Domingo Torres, José Romero, José Senorio, Juan José de Sandoval. Francisco Trujillo, Francisco Hiron, Cristoval Naranjo, José Antonio Naranjo, Bartolome Torres, Pedro Romero

Royal Grant = On the town of Santa Fé on the fifteenth day of November one thousand seven and forty 8 the Lieutenant Colonel, Governor Captain General of this Kingdom of New Mexico, Don Domingo Gaspar de Mendoza having seen this present petition made by the persons therein referred to, should order and did order that a grant be made to them of the tracts they ask for, in the name of the King, our Sovereign (Whom may God preserve) in order that they may settle cultivate and improve the same for the benefit of themselves, their children, heirs, and successors who may have a better right thereto without injury to any third party, as they promise in their said petition; Therefore I order and direct the Senior Justice of the Town of Albuquerque Don Nicolas de Chaves to give them the possession referred to under the conditions and terms required in such cases, and there being no doubt of the existence of other royal grants in the vicinity, the deeds and titles of those who adjoin, said land are required to be presented for the fulfillment of this new grant in order that it may be divided with more propriety, for the purpose of avoiding suits and difficulties at the present time as well as in the future. I deem it proper to conform to the forms which are provided. I have so provided, ordered, and signed, with my attending witnesses

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Acting by appointment in the absence of a Royal Notary, there being none, and on common paper there being none other in this Kingdom)

Signed Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza

Anto de Herrera — Jose Ximenes

It is noted in my book of Government, on file in the Archives of this Capital on the reverse of page 68. Santa Fé January 25th 1742. — Mendoza.

At this place of Our Lady of Belen, Jurisdiction of the Town of Albuquerque on the Ninth day of the Month of ~~January~~ December of the year One thousand Seven hundred and forty Captain Don Nicolas Duran y Chaves Senior Justice and War Captain of said Town and jurisdiction by virtue of the decree of Lieutenant Colonel Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza Governor and Captain General of this Kingdom, last promulgated on the fifteenth of November last past, wherein I am directed to proceed to give royal possession to Captain Diego de Torres as the representative of all the persons mentioned and signed in the foregoing petition. According to the tenor of their petition a grant is made to them in the name of His Majesty, which decree was published to those adjoining said lands, by my order and there being no objection made to the petition I proceeded to give possession. Said lands being bounded on the North by those of Captain Don Nicolas Duranny Chaves, on the South, fronting the foundation of the House of Philipe Romero, On the West the Puerco River; that portion on the opposite side of the River, ~~is bou~~ with the boundary of the settlers of the Pure and Immaculate Conception, and on the East by the Sandia Mountains

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and on the South by the ruins and walls of the house of the aforesaid, Philipe Romero, and having examined said boundaries with three abenders, and instrumental witnesses according to law I took the aforesaid Perea by the hand and walked with him over his lands, and he cried in a loud voice, pulled up grass, threw stones and made other manifestations which are made and provided in such cases, reserving the precedence in the name of His Majesty, quietly and peaceably with the same boundaries contained in his petition, whereon I directed perpetual land marks to be established giving him said lands free and with general pastures, waters, adjacent plains, lands, uses and customs in order that he, his children, heirs and successors may enjoy the same without opposition, and this Royal possession to be recorded of a sufficient title, and by virtue of which he shall enjoy the same as aforestated, and in order that it may do appear I placed at one record, Bernabé Baca, Baltazar Baca and Jose in my attendance being instrumental witnesses, who signed with me an actuary. Judge on the present common paper, that being none stamped in these parts. Before me and actuary Judge. (Signed) Faustin de Chaves (Attending) (Signed) Jose Miguel Albarez de Castillo Attending (Signed) Guillermo Sanchez.

In the town of Santa Fé, One thousand seven hundred and forty two Lieutenant Colonel Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza Governor and Captain General of this said Kingdom by His Majesty, (whom may God preserve) I state that having been informed that several residents included in this grant which was made by me said Lieutenant Colonel in the

Town of Belen

Decision

This case was set for trial on the 8th day of March 1857

In the year 1740 Captain Bruno de Torres and Antonio de Salazar petitioned (for themselves & in the name of others) Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza Governor and Captain General of New Mexico ~~petitioned~~ for a grant of a tract of land in what is now the County of Valencia, with the boundaries therein contained

On the ninth day of November 1740 said Governor & Captain General, Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza granted the land in conformity with the request of the petitioners and directed Nicolas Duran y Chaves Senior Justice and Captain of the town of Albuquerque and its jurisdiction to place the parties in possession of the land petitioned for according to the provisions of the Royal Ordinances in such cases made and provided, which was accordingly done on the ninth day of December 1740.

The documents acted upon are copies of the originals in the archives of Santa Fé, duly certified.

The testimony taken in this case shows the town to have been in existence when the United States obtained possession of the Territory and the grant and proceedings had thereon being in conformity with the usage & customs of the government of Spain in force at that time, the grant to the aforesaid town of Belen is approved and transmitted for the action of Congress in the premises

Surveyor Generals Office
Santa Fé New Mexico
March 8 1857

Wm Pelham
Surveyor General

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NEW MEXICO
Commission of Public Records
at the State Records Center and Archives
Your Access to Public Information

December 2, 2016

Kenneth Gibson
1200 W. Chavez Ave.
Belen, NM 87002

RE: State Archives Request No. 2017-147

Dear Mr. Gibson:

You requested information about the date of the founding of the town of Belen.
I've enclosed two articles from the Office of the State Historian's website about the founding of Belen.

Nov. 15, 1740 is the date that Don Gaspar Dominguez de Mendoza, Governor and Captain General of New Mexico, approved the petition from Diego de Torres and Antonio Salazar for a land grant to be known as Nuestra Senora de Belen. I found this information on page 34 of the book *The Place Names of New Mexico* by Robert Julyan, published by UNM Press in Albuquerque in 1996.

The actual Belen Grant documents are in the Spanish Archives of New Mexico Series 1, Land Records, Surveyor General # 13, Town of Belen Grant at the State Archives. They are viewable here at the Archives on microfilm, or at the Center for Southwest Research at the University of New Mexico's Zimmerman Library.

These documents have been digitized and are also viewable on line via www.Ancestry.com. On the Ancestry website, they are in the collection "New Mexico, Land Records of New Spain, 1692-1846, Land Grant Case Files, Serial 10305, SG Reports 9 – 13, images 377 – 408." I've made photocopies of what I believe are the pages relevant to your question, pages 377-388 and page 397. The cost for the 13 pages at $0.25 per page comes to $3.25 for the photocopies, plus $1.22 for shipping and handling. The total amount due is $4.47. Please send a check or money order written payable to "NMCPR" for New Mexico Commission of Public Records (the State Archives is a Division of the NMCPR).

Best wishes,

SM

Sibel Melik
Senior Archivist
State Archives of New Mexico / New Mexico Commission of Public Records
1205 Camino Carlos Rey
Santa Fe, NM 87507
(505) 476-7959

Enclosures: 2

Robert J. Tórrez *Historian/Chair*
Hon. Hector Balderas *Attorney General*
Hon. Tim Keller *State Auditor*
Hon. Brad Winter *Secretary of State*
Jeff Pappas *Department of Cultural Affairs*
Edwynn Burckle *General Services Department*
Lynne S. Rhys *State Law Librarian*

New Mexico Office of the State Historian

Belen

In his 1777 reminiscences, Juan Candelaria recalled that "Nuestra Señora de Belen" was founded in 1741 with the help of genízaro Indians (Armijo 1929:280-281). On May 19, 1760 the houses of the settlement of Belén on the other side of the Río Grande came into Bishop Tamarón's view, and from there on 171 the countryside was covered by great poplar groves. Tamarón was received by the alcalde of Tomé with the citizens of his town, of Belén and of Isleta (Adams 1953:201). On August 14, 1766 Lafora commented that this settlement of 38 genízaro and Spanish families lay across the Río Grande from Tomé in a well-cultivated and pastured area (Alessio Robles 1939:96). On 14 November 1780, Juan Bautista de Anza left the pueblo near Valencia and traveled six leagues south, stopping for the night opposite the pueblo of Belen. It was five leagues further south to Las Nutrias (Thomas 1932:198). In December 1846, George Rutledge Gibson and Doniphan's army passed through Belen while following the west bank of the Río Grande from Alburquerque to Valverde (Bieber 1935:284-287). Given that most colonial traffic passed along the east bank of the Río Grande, the most used caravan paraje would have been opposite the town of Belén.

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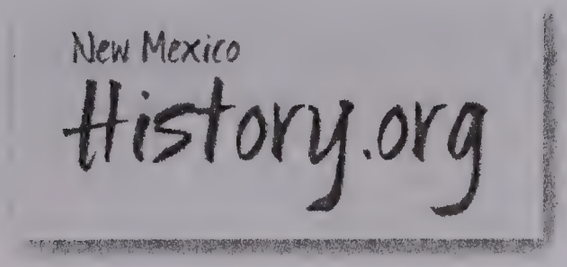
http://newmexicohistory.org/people/belen-grant



(From the website of the Office of the State Historian)

Belen Grant

by J. J. Bowden

The common combination of large families and insufficient land prompted a group of thirty-four colonists from Santa Cruz, led by Captain Diego de Torres, to petition Governor Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza for a grant covering a choice tract of vacant land[1] located on both sides of the Rio Grande and described as being:

Bounded on the north, by the lands of Nicolas de Chaves and the Town of Tome; on the east, by the Sandia Mountains; on the south, by the ruins of the hacienda of Felipe Romero; and on the west, by the Rio Puerco.

Since the Spanish government was anxious to have the Rio Abajo Area resettled, Governor Mendoza promptly acted upon the request. By an instrument entitled "Royal Grant" dated November 15, 1740, he ordered that the grant be made to the parties named in the petition. Recognizing that other grants previously had been made in the area, the governor directed the Senior Alcalde and War Captain of Albuquerque, Nicolas Duran of Chaves, to investigate and satisfy himself that the new concession would not conflict with the vested rights of any third party. If the alcalde determined that the Belen Grant did not conflict with any of the senior grants, then he was to place the grantees in legal possession of the lands embraced within the boundaries described in their petition. On December 9, 1740, Alcalde Duran reported that he had given notice to the adjoining landowners of the issuance of this grant in accordance with the governor's instructions and haying received no protests, he performed the ceremonies necessary to place the grantees in possession of the grant. Since a number of the grantees failed to promptly settle upon the grant as they had agreed, Governor Mendoza issued an order on July 20, 1742, which provided that any grantee who had not settled upon the grant by August 19, 1742, would forfeit all rights under the concession.[2]

In order to protect their settlement from the Indians, the inhabitants of Belen formed a local militia of one hundred men. The militiamen were required to furnish their own horses, arms and equipment, but proved so effective that a large rancheria of Jicarillas which had posed a threat to the new community was finally abandoned by the Indians, who moved to the Anton Chico Area. As early as 1760, Belen was considered as a military outpost or quasi-presidio.[3] By 1793,

Belen had achieved the status of a partido. When the United States acquired New Mexico, Belen was one of the most important towns in the Rio Abajo Area.

On January 26, 1857, Attorney N. Ashurst filed a petition on behalf of all the residents of the Belen Grant in the Surveyor General's office, requesting the confirmation of the grant. After investigating the validity of the claim, Surveyor General William Pelham rendered a decision dated March 8, 1857, wherein he recommended that the Belen Grant be confirmed by Congress.[4] Based upon the Surveyor General's favorable report, Congress passed the Act of December 22, 1858, which confirmed, among other grants, the Belen Grant.[5]

A preliminary survey of the grant was made in 1859, by Deputy Surveyor John W. Garretson, which showed that the grant embraced 194,663.75 acres. A patent was issued to the Town of Belen and its successors and assigns on April 28, 1871, for all of the lands described in Garretson's survey.[6] Since the patenting of the grant, it has been managed and controlled by the Board of Trustees of the Belen Grant, a corporation organized and existing under the general laws of the State of New Mexico.

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[1] There is a question as to whether or not the lands covered by the Belen Grant were actually vacant at the time Captain Torres and the other grantees filed their petition. In 1746, Antonio Casados and Luis Quintana brought a suit before the Governor of New Mexico against the owners of the Belen Grant, claiming that the lands at Belen were the property of an Indian pueblo which had been formed for the Genízaros. The Genízaros were Christianized Indians who had been captured or kidnapped by hostile Indians but were later ransomed. The Governor forwarded the problem to the Viceroy for his decision. Nothing seems to have come of this litigation and the Genízaros who were living on the grant were gradually absorbed into the community. Archive No. 183 (Mss., Records of the A.N.M.).

[2] H. R. Report No. 321, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., 203-206 (1860).

[3] Stanley, The Belen Story. 6 (1962)

[4]The Town of Belen Grant, No. 13 (Mss., Records of the S.G.N.M.).

[5] An Act to Confirm the Land Claims of Certain Pueblos and Towns in the Territory of New Mexico, Chap. 5, 11 Stat. 374 (1858).

[6] 34 Deed Records 462 (Mss., Records of the County Clerk's office. Socorro, New Mexico)

NO. 113 1768
PROCEEDINGS
Grantees of the Belen tract vs
Pedro Yturbieta for sale of land
to Fernando Chaves.

New Mexico State Archives

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Spanish Archives of New Mexico Series I Land Records (SANM I)
Surveyor General (SG) # 13, "Town of Belen Grant"
[This is a copy of the original documents + translation + finding, but not the entire 32 p. case file.]

SG #13
TOWN OF BELEN GRANT
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Courtesy of the State Archives of New Mexico, a division of the NM Commission of Public Records.

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Sor. Gov.r y Cap.n Gen.l = El Capitan Diego de Torres y Ant.o
Salazar, y los demas j.e abajo firmados, ante la grandeza de V. S.
con el mayor rendim.to y rev.do debo: que por q.to no hallamos con
cmodidad familias, y no tenemos tierras comodas p.a
p.a poderlas mantener, y tener vista un sitio yermo despoblado, y como tal nos hallamos
ya en el puesto del Rio-Abajo, le registramos y pedimos de merced
en el Real nombre de V. M. (q.e D. G.) q.e poblamos en el, habiendo
dho tierras de labores las q.e fueren comodas p.a ello, y en las q.e no,
der tener en que pastar nros ganados mayores y menores; el q.e ofre-
cemos mantener y poblar, Leg.s reales ordenanzas previenen: cuyos
linderos son, p.r la p.te del oriente, la Sierra de Sandia, y
p.r el poniente el Rio-grande: por el Norte, de una y otra banda del
Rio, conteniendo las tierras de Nicolas de Chaves, y la de los vecinos po-
bladores de N. S. de la Concepc.n sitio de Jemez; y p.r el Sur, el Paraje
q.e se llaman de Pupe. Romero, linea recta hta. empezar con
los lind.os q.e dho expresados de oriente a poniente. Lo que, Rogando
do V. M. rendido de hacernos la merced q.e pedimos, sin perjui-
cio de tercero q.e pueda tener mejor drō. poblaremos como
dho. es; pues p.a todo lo cual, a V. M. pedimos y suplicamos
rendidam.te sea muy servido de proveher y mandar como he-
mos pedido, que en ello recibiremos merced y buena obra. y
juramos en devida forma q.e este mro. escrito no es de mali-
cia alguna sino p.a socorrer nras. necesidades. = Diego de Torres
= Ant.o Salazar = Pedro Vigil = Mig.l Salazar = Juana Pere-
da Romero = Lugarda Romero = Juan Ant.o Salazar = Mig.l Sa-
lazar = Pablo Salazar = Nicolas Salazar = Manl. Ant.o Trujillo = Ma.
Torres = Salvador Torres = Juan Ant.o Torres = Pedro Torres = Ca-
yetano = Christoval Torres = Diego Torres = Bart.a Romero =
= Gabriel Romero = M.a Vigil = Jose Trujillo = Fran.co Mar-
tin = Nicolas Martiniano = Sgt.o Barrera = Juan Domingo Torres
= Jose Romero = Jose Ignacio = Juan Jose de Sandoval = Fran.co

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Trujillo = Franco Xiron = Christoval Narrro = Jouan.to Naron
Jo = Bme. Jorre = Pedro Romero = Merced Real

En la villa de Sta. Fee. a los quince dias del mes de Jb.o de mil setec.tos cuarenta, Yo el Mr.e Coron.l Gov.r y Cap.n Grāl. de este Reyno de la Nueva Mex.co D.n Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, visto el presente escrito p.r los mencionados en él, devia mandar y mandè se les diese la merced del sitio q.e piden en nombre del Rey N. S. (D. D. G.) p.a q.e lo puebles, cultiven y beneficien p.a Si, sus hijos, herederos, subcesores en q.e mas Dō. tengan sin perjuicio de tercero como lo prometen en su mismo escrito; p.r lo q.e ordeno y mando al Alc.e mayor de la villa de Alburq.e D. Nicolas de Chaves le dè la posesion mencionada con las circunstancias y calidades q.e en tales casos se requieren; con apercivim.to q.e como no puede dejar de haver en aquellas inmediaciones otras mercedes reales en que es neces.o q.e a la data y señalam.to de esta nueva merced se lleven los instrum.tos y papeles de los q.e pudieren alindar con esta; p.a q.e con mayor claridad le pueda hacer el repasto de ello y divisiones, a fin de q.e en lo presente no en lo futuro se formen pleitos ni discordias: p.r lo q.e me parece muy conveniente se observe la forma que se previene. Asi lo proveì, mandè y firmè con los testigos de mi assist.a actuando p.r recept.a a falta de escribano R.l q.e no lo hay, y en papel comun p.r no correr otro en este Reyno = D. Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza = Ant.o de Herrero = = Jose Ferrus ═══ Queda anotada en mi libro de gov.no que para en el archivo de esta capital a foxas 66 v.ta = Sta. Fee y Jul.o 29 de 1742 = Mendoza ═══ En este Pueblo de N. S. de Belen, Jurisdic.n de la villa de Alburq.e en diez y nueve dias del mes de Dic.e del año de mil setec.tos cuarenta, Yo el Cap.n D.n Nicolas Duran y Chaves, Alc.e mayor y cap.n a guerra de dha villa y Jurisdic.n en virtud del auto del Sor. Mr.e Coronel D.n Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Gov.r y Cap.n Gral. de este Reyno pronunciado el quince del pp.do Nov.e del mismo año en q.e me manda

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pase y dé, R.l posesion al Cap.n Diego de Torres, en cuyo de todos los mencionados y firmado en el escrito q.e antecede, p.r el tenor de su pedim.to se le confiere en nombre de su Mag.d cuyo auto fue intimado p.r mi ssñn. a los vecinos y circunvecinos de dha. tapia. en las q.e no hallando ning.a contradic.n sobre lo q.e pide, pasé a dar la posesion, lindando dha. tapia. p.r la pte. del Norte con la del Cap.n D.n Nicolas Duran y Chave, p.r la del Sur, apuntado a la ruina de la casa de Jph.e Romero: Por el Poniente el Rio Puerco por lo q.e mira a la otra banda del Rio al Norte, con el lind.o de los Pobladores, en la Pura y limpia Concepc.n y p.r el oriente con la Sierra de Sandia, y p.r el Sur con padres y ruinas de dha. casa del expresado Felipe Romero. y haviendo reconocido dho. lindero con tres Testigos de assist.a e instrumentales Leg.s fho. tomé de la mano al referido Torres, lo pasee p.r su tapia. y dio voces en Semejante caso requiriendo, pertenencia, pertenecido esta posesion en nombre de su Mag.d quieta y pacifica.m.te con los mismos lind.s q.e expresa su petic.n; en los cuales mandé le pusiesen perpetuas mohoneras, dandosela dha. tapia. libre y generalm.te con p.r sí, sus hijos, herederos y subcesores, sin perjuicio ninguno. pasto, agua, abrevadero, monte, uso y costumbre, p.r q.e la goze y esta Real posesion, le sea de bastante titulo, y p.r ello la goze como dho. es; pues p.r q.e contra lo puse p.r dil.a siendo Testigos instrumentales Bernabé Baca y Baltazar Baca, y los de mí assist.a q.e lo firmaron con migo actuando como Juez receptor en el presente papel comun p.r no correr en esta parte el sello. Ante mí, y como Juez Receptor, Nicolas de chave. = De assist.a = D.r Mig.l Albarez del Castillo = De assist.a = Guillermo Sabedra =

En la villa de Sta. Fee, Capital de este Reyno de N. Mexico, a los veinte dias del mes de Julio de mil setec.tos cuarenta y dos, Yo el Th.e coronel D. Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Gov.r y Cap.n Gen.l de este dho. Reyno

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no p.r su Mag.d (Q. D. G.) Digo que hallandome informado q.e diferentes vecinos que se incluyen en la presente Merced que se les hizo p.r mi dho. Ho. coronl. en nombre del Rey N. S. y p.r cavesa de ella el Cap.n Diego Torres devia mandar y mande que todas las personas que no han ocupado dha. merced y puesto, ni fuesen a ocuparla en el termino de treinta dias q.e deveran contarse desde el dia de la fha. se les da p.r escluidos a la merced y tras. q.e pudieran tener dro. a ellas si las huviesen havitado: y que los pertenecientes de tras. a estos q.e se escluyan si no cumplen con lo ordenado se daran p.r realengas o se repartiran en las personas q.e las havitan deviendo cumplir con lo que citan las leyes reales sobre poblar y cultivar las tras: y asi lo provei, mande y firme con los de mi asist.a en la forma acostumbrada, y en el presente papel p.r no haver otro de q.e doy fe. = D. Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza = testigo Salvador Martinez y Ant. Lote.

Es traslado que una copia legalisada de la original que se halla en el archivo de Sta. Fée en un libro de Gov.o p.r los señores de arriba a su foxs. setenta y ocho v.ta

Ag.o 4 de 1834

Guadalupe Dias de Vijil

File 40 A

Recorded in Volume II of Surveyor General's Claims Record Office, 364, 365, 366, 367

David Miller, Translator

A

I

The United States of America

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting!

Whereas, the land claim of the "Town of Belen" in the Territory of New Mexico, is duly entered as number Thirteen in the Report dated the thirtieth day of September, one thousand eight hundred and fifty seven of the United States Surveyor General for said Territory, is there favorably reported upon, and has since been confirmed by the "Act of Congress approved December 22d 1858, entitled "An Act to Confirm the land Claims of certain Pueblos and Towns in the Territory of New Mexico"-

And Whereas, There has been deposited in the General Land Office of the United States a Return with a plat of the Survey of the said claim, Confirmed as aforesaid, authenticated on the 5th day of November, 1860, by the Signature of the United Surveyor General of the

1992.002.1

United States of America
Territory of New Mexico }

To the Surveyor General
of New Mexico

Joachin A Baca. Juan Chy Baca
Antonio Jose Castillo Antonio
Chavis ——— Citizens of the
United States and residents of the
County of Valencia Territory of New
Mexico for behalf of themselves and
the settlers and residents of the Town
of Belen. Represent that the original
Settlers of said Town under whom
your Petitioners hold, became possessed
of the said lands appertaining to
said Town by virtue of a Grant
made to Diego de Torres de Salazar.
Pedro Ruiz, and Miguel Salazar,
and thirty two other persons as
original settlers, by Gaspar
Domingo de Mendoza Gov. and
Captain General of the Department
of New Mexico on the 15th day
of A.D. 1740, which title
deeds fully appear by reference
to Copy of Documents herewith
filed, Said land as appears
by said Deed of Grant is bounded
as follows. On the East by the
edge of the mountain of Sandia
On the West by the River Puerco.
On the North on each side of
the Rio Del Norte by the lands of

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of Nicolas de Chaves and the
Lands of the Settlers of Sonora,
one on the South the Island called
Romero running in a straight
line until it crosses the line
from East to West.

Your Petitioners
further state that they cannot
show the quantity of land claim-
ed except so far as the same is set
forth in the well known land
marks bounding said land nor
can they furnish a map or plat
of delineation of the same as no
Survey has ever been made
your Petitioners state that they
and those under whom they
hold claim have been in peaceable
possession ever since the execution
of said deed of grant and the
date thereof they were then in
possession, which will appear
by said papers herewith filed
and that your Petitioners know
of no adverse claim to said
Lands. For confirmation of the
grant they refer your honors
to the laws usages and customs
of Spain & America in force
at the date of said grant

M. Adams
Pro Petitioners

No 43

Joaclin Bastan.
Juan Cruz Baca.
and others.
Petition for
Confirmation of
Grants to the
Town of Belen,

Recorded in Volume I of
Land Claims Records
in Surveyor Generals Office
page 363.

Leon J. Millet,
Translator.

Territory of New Mexico
County of Valencia "Copy"

To His Excellency the Governor and Captain General & Captain Diego de Torres and Antonio de Salazar, and the other signers hereto, before the greatness of Your Excellency with the greatest proper submission state that whereas we have large families and living no convenient lands wherewith to support them and having examined an uncultivated and vacant tract of land, at the point of the Rio Abajo, and being unappropriated, we register the same and petition for a grant in the Royal name of His Majesty (whom may God preserve) ~~under~~ for the purposes of settling thereupon there being suitable land for cultivation and such as is not will answer for pasture grounds for our lands and flocks. Which we promise to occupy and settle as required by the Royal Ordinances. The boundaries of which are, On the East, the Sandia Mountains; and on the West, the Puerco River; On the North, on both sides of the river the boundary is the lands of Nicolas de Chaves, and those of the adjoining settlers of boundary of the Conception, tract of Tomé, and on the South the place called Phelipe Romero; in a direct line until it intersects the boundaries ~~above~~ above mentioned from East to West, Which, Your Excellency being pleased to grant to us as requested, without injury to any third party having a better right, we will settle thereupon as afore stated. In view of all which we humbly pray and request Your Excellency to be pleased to provide and direct as we request by doing which we will receive grace and favor And we swear in due form that this our petition is not done in malice but for the purpose of overcoming our difficulties Signed Diego Torres de Salazar Pedro Vigil, Miguel Salazar, Juana Teresa Romero, Segunda Romero, Juan Antonio Salazar, Miguel

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Salazar, Pablo Salazar, Nicolas Salazar, Manuel Antonio Trujillo, Maria Torres, Salvador Torres, José Antonio Torres, Pedro Torres, Cayetano, Cristobal Torres, Diego Torres, Barbara Romero, Gabriel Romero, Maria Vigil, Jose Trujillo, Francisco Martino, Nicolas Martiniano, Ygnacio Barrera, Juan Domingo Torres, José Romero, Jose Senorio, Juan José de Sandoval, Francisco Trujillo, Francisco Hiron, Cristoval Naranjo, José Antonio Naranjo, Bartolome Torres, Pedro Romero

Royal Grant = In the town of Santa Fé on the fifteenth day of November one thousand seven and forty 8 the Lieutenant Colonel, Governor & Captain General of this Kingdom of New Mexico, Don Domingo Gaspar de Mendoza having seen the present petition made by the persons therein referred to, should order and did order that a grant be made to them of the tracts they ask for, in the name of the King, our Sovereign (Whom may God preserve) in order that they may settle cultivate and improve the same for the benefit of themselves, their children, heirs, and successors who may have a better right thereto without injury to any third party, as they promise in their said petition; Therefore I order and direct the Senior Justice of the Town of Albuquerque Don Nicolas de Chaves to give them the possession referred to under the conditions and terms required in such cases, and there being no doubt of the existence of other royal grants in the precinct, the deeds and titles of those who are adjoining said land are required to be presented for the fulfillment of this new grant in order that it may be divided with more propriety, for the purpose of avoiding suits and difficulties at the present time as well as in the future. I deem it proper to conform to the terms which are now provided. I have so provided, ordered, and signed, with my attending witnesses

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Acting by appointment in the absence of a Royal Notary, there being none, and on common paper there being none either in this Kingdom)

Signed Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza

Ante de Herrera — Jose Gomez

It is noted in my book of Government, on file in the Archives of this Capital on the reverse of page 68. Santa Fe January 23th 1742 — Mendoza.

At this place of Our Lady of Belen, Jurisdiction of the Town of Albuquerque on the Ninth day of the month of ~~January~~ December of the year One thousand Seven hundred and forty I Captain Don Nicolas Durand y Chaves Senior Justice and War Captain of said town and jurisdiction by virtue of the decree of Lieutenant Colonel Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza Governor and Captain General of this Kingdom, that pronounced on the fifteenth of November last past, wherein I am directed to proceed to give royal possession to Captain Diego de Torres as the representative of all the persons mentioned and signed in the foregoing petition. According to the terms of their petition a grant is made to them in the name of His Majesty, which decree was published to those adjoining said lands, by my order and there being no objection made to the petition I proceeded to give possession. Said lands being bounded on the North by those of Captain Don Nicolas Durand y Chaves, on the South, fronting the foundation of the House of Phelipe Romero; On the West the Puerco River; that portion on the opposite side of the River, ~~is bou~~ with the boundary of the settlers of the Pure and Immaculate Conception, and on the East by the Sandia Mountains

and on the South by the ruins and walls of the house of the aforesaid, Phelipe Tomas, and having examined said boundaries with three attending and instrumental witnesses, according to law I took the aforesaid Porras by the hand and walked with him over his lands, and he cried in a loud voice, pulled up grass, threw stones and made other manifestations which are usual and provided in such cases, remaining the possession in the name of His Majesty, quietly and peaceably with the same boundaries contained in his petition, whereon I directed perpetual land marks to be established; giving him said lands free and with general pastures, waters, pasturing places, lands, usos and customs, in order that he, his children, heirs and successors may enjoy the same without opposition, and this Royal possession to be recorded of a sufficient title, and by virtue of which he shall enjoy the same as aforestated, and in order that it may do appear, I placed at the record, Bernabé Baca, Baltazar Baca and those in my attendance being instrumental witnesses, who signed with me and acting Judge on the present common paper, there being none stamped in these parts. Before me—and acting Judge, (signed) Nicolas de Chaves (Attending) (signed) Jose Miguel Abreu de Castillo Attending (signed) Guillermo Sanchez

In the town of Santa Fé, One thousand seven hundred and forty two (1742) Lieutenant Colonel Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza Governor and Captain General of this said Kingdom by His Majesty, (whom may God preserve) states that having been informed that several residents included in this grant which was made by me said Lieutenant Colonel in the

~~Decision~~

Town of Belen

Decision

This case was set for trial on the 8th day of March 1857

In the year 1740 Captain Diego de Torres and Antonio de Salazar petitioned Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza Governor and Captain General of New Mexico ~~petitioned~~ for a grant of a tract of land in what is now the County of Valencia, with the boundaries therein contained for themselves and in the name of others

On the ninth day of November 1740 said Governor & Captain General, Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza granted the land in conformity with the request of the petitioners and directed Nicolas Duran y Chaves Senior Justice and War Captain of the town of Albuquerque and its jurisdiction to place the parties in possession of the land petitioned for according to the provisions of the Royal Ordinances in such cases made and provided; which was accordingly done on the tenth day of December 1740.

The documents acted upon are copies of the originals in the archives of Santa Fé, duly certified.

The testimony taken in the case, shows the town to have been in existence when the United States obtained possession of the Territory and the grant and proceedings had thereon being, in conformity with the usage & customs of the government of Spain in force at that time, the grant to the aforesaid town of Belen is approved and transmitted for the action of Congress in the premises

Surveyor Generals Office
Santa Fé New Mexico
March 8 1857

Wm. Pelham
Surveyor General

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NEW MEXICO
Commission *of* Public Records

Your Access to Public Information

December 2, 2016

Kenneth Gibson
1200 W. Chavez Ave.
Belen, NM 87002

RE: State Archives Request No. 2017-147

Dear Mr. Gibson:

You requested information about the date of the founding of the town of Belen.
I've enclosed two articles from the Office of the State Historian's website about the founding of Belen.

Nov. 15, 1740 is the date that Don Gaspar Dominguez de Mendoza, Governor and Captain General of New Mexico, approved the petition from Diego de Torres and Antonio Salazar for a land grant to be known as Nuestra Senora de Belen. I found this information on page 34 of the book *The Place Names of New Mexico* by Robert Julyan, published by UNM Press in Albuquerque in 1996.

The actual Belen Grant documents are in the Spanish Archives of New Mexico Series 1, Land Records, Surveyor General # 13, Town of Belen Grant at the State Archives. They are viewable here at the Archives on microfilm, or at the Center for Southwest Research at the University of New Mexico's Zimmerman Library.

These documents have been digitized and are also viewable on line via www.Ancestry.com. On the Ancestry website, they are in the collection "New Mexico, Land Records of New Spain, 1692-1846, Land Grant Case Files, Serial 10305, SG Reports 9 – 13, images 377 – 408." I've made photocopies of what I believe are the pages relevant to your question, pages 377-388 and page 397. The cost for the 13 pages at $0.25 per page comes to $3.25 for the photocopies, plus $1.22 for shipping and handling. The total amount due is $4.47. Please send a check or money order written payable to "NMCPR" for New Mexico Commission of Public Records (the State Archives is a Division of the NMCPR).

Best wishes,

Sibel Melik
Senior Archivist
State Archives of New Mexico / New Mexico Commission of Public Records
1205 Camino Carlos Rey
Santa Fe, NM 87507
(505) 476-7959

Enclosures: 2

1205 Camino Carlos Rey

Robert J. Tórrez *Historian/Chair* | **Hon. Hector Balderas** *Attorney General* | **Hon. Tim Keller** *State Auditor* | **Hon. Brad Winter** *Secretary of State*

Jeff Pappas *Department of Cultural Affairs* | **Edwynn Burckle** *General Services Department* | **Lynne S. Rhys** *State Law Librarian*

New Mexico Office of the State Historian

Belen

In his 1777 reminiscences, Juan Candelaria recalled that "Nuestra Señora de Belen" was founded in 1741 with the help of genízaro Indians (Armijo 1929:280-281). On May 19, 1760 the houses of the settlement of Belén on the other side of the Río Grande came into Bishop Tamarón's view, and from there on 171 the countryside was covered by great poplar groves. Tamarón was received by the alcalde of Tomé with the citizens of his town, of Belén and of Isleta (Adams 1953:201). On August 14, 1766 Lafora commented that this settlement of 38 genízaro and Spanish families lay across the Río Grande from Tomé in a well-cultivated and pastured area (Alessio Robles 1939:96). On 14 November 1780, Juan Bautista de Anza left the pueblo near Valencia and traveled six leagues south, stopping for the night opposite the pueblo of Belen. It was five leagues further south to Las Nutrias (Thomas 1932:198). In December 1846, George Rutledge Gibson and Doniphan's army passed through Belen while following the west bank of the Río Grande from Alburquerque to Valverde (Bieber 1935:284-287). Given that most colonial traffic passed along the east bank of the Río Grande, the most used caravan paraje would have been opposite the town of Belén.

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http://newmexicohistory.org/people/belen-grant

(From the website of the Office of the State Historian)

Belen Grant

by J. J. Bowden

The common combination of large families and insufficient land prompted a group of thirty-four colonists from Santa Cruz, led by Captain Diego de Torres, to petition Governor Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza for a grant covering a choice tract of vacant land[1] located on both sides of the Rio Grande and described as being:

Bounded on the north, by the lands of Nicolas de Chaves and the Town of Tome; on the east, by the Sandia Mountains; on the south, by the ruins of the hacienda of Felipe Romero; and on the west, by the Rio Puerco.

Since the Spanish government was anxious to have the Rio Abajo Area resettled, Governor Mendoza promptly acted upon the request. By an instrument entitled "Royal Grant" dated November 15, 1740, he ordered that the grant be made to the parties named in the petition. Recognizing that other grants previously had been made in the area, the governor directed the Senior Alcalde and War Captain of Albuquerque, Nicolas Duran of Chaves, to investigate and satisfy himself that the new concession would not conflict with the vested rights of any third party. If the alcalde determined that the Belen Grant did not conflict with any of the senior grants, then he was to place the grantees in legal possession of the lands embraced within the boundaries described in their petition. On December 9, 1740, Alcalde Duran reported that he had given notice to the adjoining landowners of the issuance of this grant in accordance with the governor's instructions and haying received no protests, he performed the ceremonies necessary to place the grantees in possession of the grant. Since a number of the grantees failed to promptly settle upon the grant as they had agreed, Governor Mendoza issued an order on July 20, 1742, which provided that any grantee who had not settled upon the grant by August 19, 1742, would forfeit all rights under the concession.[2]

In order to protect their settlement from the Indians, the inhabitants of Belen formed a local militia of one hundred men. The militiamen were required to furnish their own horses, arms and equipment, but proved so effective that a large rancheria of Jicarillas which had posed a threat to the new community was finally abandoned by the Indians, who moved to the Anton Chico Area. As early as 1760, Belen was considered as a military outpost or quasi-presidio.[3] By 1793,

Belen had achieved the status of a partido. When the United States acquired New Mexico, Belen was one of the most important towns in the Rio Abajo Area.

On January 26, 1857, Attorney N. Ashurst filed a petition on behalf of all the residents of the Belen Grant in the Surveyor General's office, requesting the confirmation of the grant. After investigating the validity of the claim, Surveyor General William Pelham rendered a decision dated March 8, 1857, wherein he recommended that the Belen Grant be confirmed by Congress.[4] Based upon the Surveyor General's favorable report, Congress passed the Act of December 22, 1858, which confirmed, among other grants, the Belen Grant.[5]

A preliminary survey of the grant was made in 1859, by Deputy Surveyor John W. Garretson, which showed that the grant embraced 194,663.75 acres. A patent was issued to the Town of Belen and its successors and assigns on April 28, 1871, for all of the lands described in Garretson's survey.[6] Since the patenting of the grant, it has been managed and controlled by the Board of Trustees of the Belen Grant, a corporation organized and existing under the general laws of the State of New Mexico.

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[1] There is a question as to whether or not the lands covered by the Belen Grant were actually vacant at the time Captain Torres and the other grantees filed their petition. In 1746, Antonio Casados and Luis Quintana brought a suit before the Governor of New Mexico against the owners of the Belen Grant, claiming that the lands at Belen were the property of an Indian pueblo which had been formed for the Genízaros. The Genízaros were Christianized Indians who had been captured or kidnapped by hostile Indians but were later ransomed. The Governor forwarded the problem to the Viceroy for his decision. Nothing seems to have come of this litigation and the Genízaros who were living on the grant were gradually absorbed into the community. Archive No. 183 (Mss., Records of the A.N.M.).

[2] H. R. Report No. 321, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., 203-206 (1860).

[3] Stanley, The Belen Story. 6 (1962)

[4]The Town of Belen Grant, No. 13 (Mss., Records of the S.G.N.M.).

[5] An Act to Confirm the Land Claims of Certain Pueblos and Towns in the Territory of New Mexico, Chap. 5, 11 Stat. 374 (1858).

[6] 34 Deed Records 462 (Mss., Records of the County Clerk's office. Socorro, New Mexico)

NO. 113 1768
PROCEEDINGS
Grantees of the Belen tract vs
Pedro Yturbieta for sale of land
to Fernando Chaves.

New Mexico State Archives
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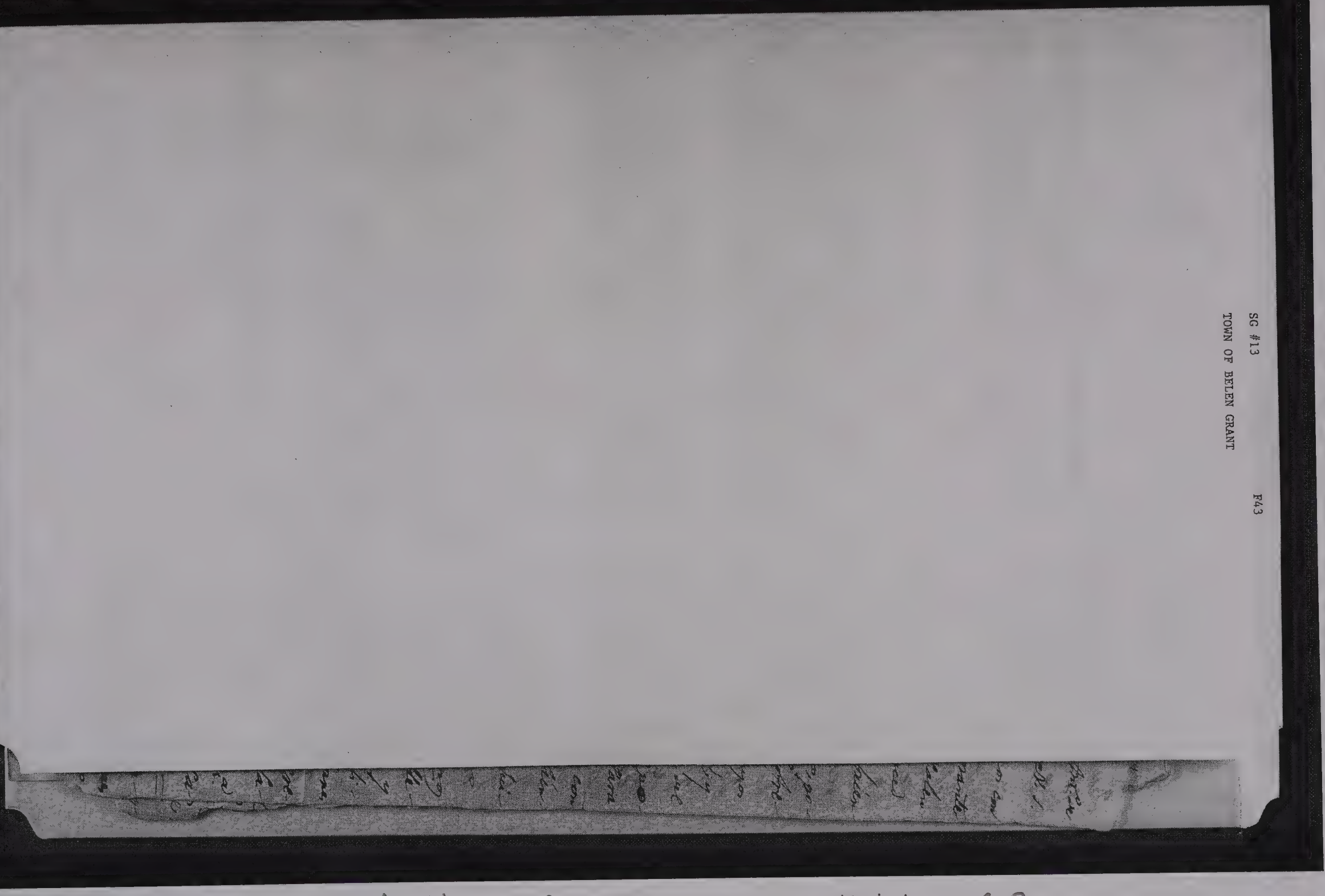
Spanish Archives of New Mexico Series I Land Records (SANM 1)
Surveyor General (SG) # 13, "Town of Belen Grant"
[This is a copy of the original documents + translation + finding, but not the entire 32 p. case file]

SG #13
TOWN OF BELEN GRANT
F43



Courtesy of the State Archives of New Mexico, a division of the NM Commission of Public Records.

Sor. Gov.or y Cap.n Gen.l = El Capitan Diego de Torres y Ant.o de Salazar, y los demas y.e abajo firmamos, ante la grandeza de V. S. con el mayor rendim.to rendido decimos: que por q.to no hallamos con crecidas familias, y no tenemos tan.as comodid.s p.a poderlas mantener, y tener vivir con alivio estamos despoblados, y como tal resolvimos en el puesto del Rio-Abajo; le registramos y pedimos de merced en el Real nombre de S. M. (q.D.G.) y p.a poblarnos en él, habiendo tan.as de labores las q.e fueren comodas p.a ello, y en las q.e no, poder tener en que pastar nros. ganados mayores y menores; el q.e obligamos mantener y poblar, Leg.s reales ordenanzas previenen: cuyos linderos son, p.r la p.te del oriente, la Sierra de Sandia; y p.r el poniente el Rio-grande: por el Norte, de una y otra banda del Rio, sentin.os las tan.as de Nicolas de Chaves, y la de los vecinos poblad.es de N. S. de la Concepc.n sitio de Tome; y p.r el Sur, el Paraje q.e nos llaman de Tupe. Romero; linea recta tira. Empezar con los lind.os q.e dho expresados de oriente a poniente. Lo que, siendo V. S. servido de hacernos la merced q.e pedimos, sin perjuicio de tercero q.e pueda tener mejor drō. poblaremos como dho. es; pues p.a todo lo cual. a V. S. pedimos y suplicamos rendidam.te sea muy servido de proveher y mandar como llevamos pedido, que en ello recibiremos merced y buena obra. y Juramos en devida forma q.e este mro. escrito no es de malicia alguna Lino q.e socorrer nras. declaraciones. = Diego de Torres = Ant.o de Salazar = Pedro Vigil = Mig.l Salazar = Juana Perea Romero = Luzarda Romero = Juan Ant.o Salazar = Mig.l Salazar = Pablo Salazar = Nicolas Salazar = Manl. Ant.o Bustillo = Ma. Torres = Salvador Torres = Joseph Ant.o Torres = Isidro Torres = Cayetano = Christoval Torres = Diego Torres = Barb.a Romero = = Gabriel Romero = M.a Vigil = Jose Trugillo = Fran.co Martin = Nicolas Maximiano = Ign.o Barrera = Juan Domingo Fodan = Jose Romero = Jose Ignacio = Juan Jose de Sandoval = Fran.co

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Trujillo = Franco Xiron = Christoval Naranjo = Joseph Naran
jo = Bme. Jorge = Pedro Romero = Merced Real

En la villa de Stã. Fee. a los quince dias del mes de Xbre. de mil setecos. cuarenta, Yo el Xptõ. Coronl. Govr. y Capn. Grãl. de este Reyno de la Nueva Mexico D.n Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, visto el presente escrito p.r los mencionados en él, devia mandar y mandè se les diese la merced del sitio q.e piden en nombre del Rey N.S. (J.D.G.) p.a q.e lo puedan, cultiven y beneficien p.a Sí, sus hijos, herederos, subcesores en q.n mas Dro. tengan sin perjuicio de tercero como lo prometen en su mismo escrito; p.r lo q.e ordeno y mando al Alc.e mayor de la villa de Alburq.e D. Nicolas de Chaves le dé la posesion mencionada con las circunstancias y calidades q.e en tales casos se requieren; con apercivimto. q.e como no pueda dejar de haver en aquellas inmediaciones otras mercedes reales en que es neces.o q.e a la data y señalamto. de esta nueva merced se lleven los instrum.tos y papeles de los q.e pudieren alindar con esta; p.a q.e con mayor claridad se pueda hacer el repartimto. de ellos y divisiones, a fin de q.e en lo presente no en lo futuro se formen pleitos ni discordias: p.r lo q.e me parece muy conveniente se observe la forma que se previene. Asi lo proveí, mandé y firmé con los testigos de mi assist.a actuando p.r recept.a a falta de escribano R.l q.e no lo hay, y en papel comun p.r no correr otro en este Reyno = D. Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza = Ante. de Herrera = = Jose Jesus ——— Queda anotada en mi libro de gov.no que para en el archivo de esta capital a fojas 66 vta. = Stã. Fee y Xbre. 25 de 1742 = Mendoza ═ En este Pueblo de N. S. de Belen, Jurisdn. de la villa de Alburq.e en diez y nueve dias del mes de Dic.e del año de mil setecos. cuarenta, Yo el Capn. D.n Nicolas Duran y Chaves, Alc.e mayor y Capn. a guerra de Stã. villa y Jurisdn. en virtud del auto del Sor. Xptõ. Coronel D.n Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Govr. y Capn. Grãl. de este Reyno proveido el quince del pp.o Nob.e del mismo año en q.e me manda

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pase y dé, Pl. posesion al Capn. Diego de Torres, en cuyo de todos los mencionados y firmados en el escrito g.e antecede, p.r el tenor de su pedim.to se le confiere en nombre de su Mag.d cuyo auto fue intimado p.r mi oñi. a los vecinos y circunvecinos de dha. tierra, en la g.l no hallando ning.a contradi.n sobre lo g.e pide, pasé a dar la posesion, lindando dhã. tierra, p.r la pte. del Norte con la del Capn. Dn. Nicolas Duran y Chaves, p.r la del Sur, afrontado a las ruinas de la casa de dho Phpe. Romero: Por el Poniente el Rio Puerco los Pobladores en la Pura y limpia Concepn. y p.r el oriente con la Sierra de Sandia, y p.r el Sur con paderes y ruinas de dhã. casa del expresado Felipe Romero. y haviendo reconocido dhos. linderos con tres testigos de asist.a e instrumentales, Leg.n Fro. tomé de la mano al referido Torres, lo pasee p.r sus tierras. y dio varias arranco Saca, tiro piedras, é hizo otras demostraciones, en semejante caso requiren, pertenecientes, poseyendo esta posesion en nombre de su Mag.d quieta y pacificam.te con los mismos linds. q.e expresa su petic.n; en los cuales mandé le pusiesen perpetuas mohoneras, dandosela dhas. tierras. libre, y generalm.te con pastos, agua, abrevaderos, montes, usos y costumbre, p.r q.e las goze p.r Sí, sus hijos, herederos y sucesores, sin perjuicio ninguno: y esta Real posesion, le sea de bastante titulo, y p.r ello las goze como dho. es; pues p.r a q.e consta lo pase p.r dilig.a siendo testigos instrumentales, Bernabe Baca y Baltasar Baca, y los de mi assist.a q.e lo firmaron con migo actuando como Juez receptor en el presente papel comun p.r no coaser en esta parte el sel- lado, Ante mi, y como Juez receptor, Nicolas de chaves = De assist.a = Dn. Dn. Alfg.l Alvarez del castillo = De assist.a = Guillermo Sabedra =

En la villa de Stã. Fee, Capital de este Reyno de N. Mexico, a los veinte dias del mes de Julio de mil setec.tos cuarenta y dos, Yo el Sñr. coronel D. Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Gov.r y Cap.n Gen.l de este Stõ. Reyno

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no p.r su Mag.d [q.D.G.] Diego que hallandome informado q.e
diferentes vecinos que se incluyen en la presente merced que
se les hizo p.r mi dho. Ill.e coron.l en nombre del Rey N.S. y
p.r cavesa de ella el Cap.n Diego Josse, devia mandar y mande
que todas las personas que no han ocupado dha. merced y
puesto, ni fueren a ocuparla en el termino de treinta
dias q.e deveran contarse desde el dia de la fha. se les da p.r
excluidos a la merced y trra. q.e pudieran tener dho. a ella si las
hubiesen habitado: y que los pertenecientes a trra. a esto q.e se
excluyan si no cumplen con lo ordenado se daran p.r vacantes o se
repartiran en las personas q.e las habitan debiendo cumplir con
lo que citan las leyes reales sobre poblar y cultivar las trras: y
asi lo proveí, mande y firmé con los de mi asist.e en la forma
acostumbrada, y en el presente papel p.r no haver otro q.e doy fe.
= D. Gaspar Domingo = ittendorn = Ante mí = Salvador Martine, y test.

y fee.

En Saltillo [illegible] de 1834 se sacó la presente copia legalizada de la original que se halla en el Archivo de Sta. Fee en un libro de Titulos de Solares [illegible] no a los [illegible] a fojas sesenta y ocho v.ta

Volumen II
Claims Papers
General
3644, 3657

Saltillo 66.c 4 de 1834

Luis Diez de Bustamante

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United States of America
Territory of New Mexico }

To the Surveyor General
of New Mexico

Joachin A Bassan. Juan Cruz Baca
Antonio Jose Castillo Antonio
Chavis ——— Citizens of the
United States and Residents of the
County of Valencia Territory of New
Mexico for behalf of themselves and
the Settlers and Residents of the Town
of Belen. Represent that the original
Letters of said Town under whose
power Petitioners hold, became possessed
of the said lands appertaining to
said Town by virtue of a grant
made to Diego de Torres de Salazar.
Pedro Vigil, and Miguel Salazar,
and thirty two other persons as
original Settlers, by Gaspar
Domingo de Mendoza. Gov. and
Captain General. of the Department
of New Mexico on the 15th day
of A.D. 1740, which title
deeds fully appear by reference
to Copy of Documents herewith
filed, Said land as appears
by said Deed of grant is bounded
as follows. On the East by the
edge of the mountain of Landia
on the West by the River Puerco
on the North on each side of
the Rio Del Norte by the lands of

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of Nicolas de Chaves and the
Islands of the Settlers of Texas,
one on the South the Island called
Romero running in a straight
line until it crosses the Line
from East to West.

Your Petitioners
further state that they cannot
show the quantity of land claimed
expects so far as the same is set
forth in the well known land
marks, bounding said land nor.
can they furnish a map or plat
of Survey of the same as no
Survey has ever been made
Your Petitioners state that they
and those under whom they
hold, have been in peaceable
possession after since the execution
of said deed of grant and the
time they were put in
possession, which will appear
by said copies herewith filed
and that your Petitioners know
of no adverse claim to said
lands. For confirmation of the
grant they refer your honor
to the laws usages and customs
of Spain & America in force
at the date of said grant
M. Adams
Pro Petitioner

File 43.

Joachin Ransan.
Juan Cruz Baca.
and others,
Petition for
Confirmation of
Grants to the
Town of Belen,

Recorded in Volume I of
"Land Claims Record"
in Surveyor Generals Office
page 369.

Chas. J. Miller,
Translator.

Territory of New Mexico
County of Valencia "Copy"

To His Excellency the Governor and Captain General = Captain Diego de Torres and Antonio de Salazar, and the other signers hereto, before the greatness of Your Excellency with the greatest proper submission state that whereas we have large families and having no convenient lands wherewith to support them and having examined an uncultivated and vacant tract of land, at the point of the Rio Abajo, and being unappropriated, we register the same and petition for a grant in the Royal name of His Majesty (whom may God preserve) ~~in order~~ for the purpose of settling thereupon there being suitable land for cultivation and such as is not will answer for pasture grounds for our herds and flocks. Which we promise to occupy and settle as required by the Royal Ordinances. The boundaries of which are, On the East, the Sandia Mountains; and on the West, the Puerco River; On the North, on both sides of the river the boundary is the lands of Nicolas de Chaves, and those of the adjoining settlers of boundary of the Concepcion, tract of Tomé, and on the South the place called Phelipe Romero; in a direct line until it intersects the boundaries ~~above~~ above mentioned from East to West, Which, Your Excellency being pleased to grant to us as requested, without injury to any third party having a better right, we will settle thereupon as above stated: In view of all which we humbly pray and request Your Excellency to be pleased to provide and direct as we request, by doing which we will receive grace and favor And we swear in due form that this our petition is not done in malice but for the purpose of overcoming our difficulties Signed Diego Torres de Salazar
Pedro Vigil, Miguel Salazar, Juana Teresa Romero, Segunda Romero, Juan Antonio Salazar, Miguel

Salazar, Pablo Salazar, Nicolas Salazar, Manuel Antonio Trujillo Maria Torres, Salvador Torres, José Antonio Torres, Pedro Torres, Cayetano, Cristobal Torres, Diego Torres, Barbara Romero, Gabriel Romero, Maria Vigil, Jose Trujillo. Francisco Martin, Nicolas Martiniano. Ygnacio Barrera, Juan Domingo Torres, José Romero, Jose Serrano, Juan José de Sandoval. Francisco Trujillo, Franco Giron, Cristoval Naranjo, José Antonio Naranjo, Bartolome Torres, Pedro Romero

Royal Grant = In the town of Santa Fé on the fifteenth day of november one thousand seven and forty I the Lieutenant Colonel, Governor & Captain General of this Kingdom of New Mexico, Don Domingo Gaspar de Mendoza having seen the present petition made by the persons therein referred to, should order and do order that a grant be made to them of the tract they ask for, in the name of the King, our Sovereign (Whom may God preserve) in order that they may settle cultivate and improve the same for the benefit of themselves, their children, heirs, and successors who may have a better right thereto without injury to any third party, as they promise in their said petition; Therefore I order and direct the Senior Justice of the Town of Albuquerque Don Nicolas de Chaves to give them the possession referred to under the conditions and terms required in such cases, and there being no doubt of the existence of other royal grants in the vecinity, the deeds and titles of those who adjoin, said land are required to be presented for the fulfillment of this new grant in order that it may be divided with more properiety, for the purpose of avoiding suits and difficulties at the present time as well as in the future I deem it proper to conform to the forms which are provided. I have so provided, ordered, and signed, with my attending witnesses

Acting by appointment in the absence of a Royal Notary, there being none, and on common paper there being none other in this Kingdom

Signed Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza

Ant.o de Herrera — Jose Ferrus

It is noted in my book of Government, on file in the Archives of this Capital on the reverse of page 68. Santa Fé January 25th 1742. Mendoza.

At this place of Our Lady of Belen, Jurisdiction of the Town of Albuquerque on the ninth day of the month of ~~January~~ December of the year one thousand seven hundred and forty I Captain Don Nicolas Duran y Chaves Senior Justice and War Captain of said town and jurisdiction by virtue of the decree of Lieutenant Colonel Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza, Governor and Captain General of this Kingdom, ~~that~~ promulgated on the fifteenth of november last past, wherein I am directed to proceed to give royal possession to Captain Diego de Torres as the representative of all the persons mentioned and signed in the foregoing petition. According to the tenor of their petition a grant is made to them in the name of His Majesty, which decree was published to those adjoining said lands, by my order and there being no objection made to the petition I proceeded to give possession. Said lands being bounded on the North by those of Captain Don Nicolas Duran y Chaves, on the South, fronting the foundation of the House of Phelipe Romero, on the West, the Puerco River; that portion on the opposite side of the River, ~~is bon~~ with the boundary of the Settlers of the Pure and Limpia Concepcion, and on the East by the Sandia mountains

and on the South by the rivins and walls of the houses of the aforesaid, Phelipe Romero, and having examined said boundaries with three attending and instrumental witnesses according to law I took the aforesaid Torres by the hand and walked with him over his lands, and he did in a loud voice, pulled up grass, threw stones and made other manifestations which are made and provided in such cases, receiving this possession in the name of His Majesty, quietly and peaceably with the same boundaries contained in his petition; wherein I directed perpetual land marks to be established, giving him said lands free and with general pastures, waters, watering places, timber uses and customs in order that he, his children heirs and successors may enjoy the same without opposition, and this Royal possession to be evidence of a sufficient title, and by virtue of which he shall enjoy the same as aforestated, and in order that it may so appear, I placed it on record. Bernabé Baca, Ballazar Baca and those in my attendance being instrumental witnesses, who signed with me as acting Judge on the present common paper there being none stamped in these parts. Before me and as acting Judge (Signed) Nicolas de Chaves (Attending) (Signed) Jose Miguel Alvarez de Castillo Attending (Signed) Guillermo Saavedra

In the town of Santa Fé, One thousand seven hundred and forty two (I Lieutenant Colonel Don Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza Governor and Captain General of this said Kingdom by His Majesty, (whom may God preserve) state that having been informed that several residents included in this grant which was made by me said Lieutenant Colonel in the

Town of Belen

Decision

This case was set for trial on the 8th day of March 1857

In the year 1740 Captain Diego de Torres and Antonio de Salazar petitioned for themselves & in the name of others Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza Governor and Captain General of New Mexico ~~petitioned~~ for a grant of a tract of land in what is now the County of Valencia, with the boundaries therein contained

On the ninth day of November 1740 said Governor & Captain General, Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza granted the land in conformity with the request of the petitioners and directed Nicolas Duran y Chaves Senior Justice and war Captain of the town of Albuquerque and its jurisdiction to place the parties in possession of the land petitioned for according to the provisions of the Royal ordinances in such cases made and provided, which was accordingly done on the ninth day of December 1740.

The documents acted upon are copies of the originals in the archives of Santa Fé, duly certified.

The testimony taken in the case shows the town to have been in existence when the United States obtained possession of the Territory and the grant and proceedings had thereon being in conformity with the usage & customs of the government of Spain in force at that time, the grant to the aforesaid town of Belen is approved and transmitted for the action of Congress in the premises

Surveyor Generals Office
Santa Fé New Mexico
March 8 1857

Wm Pelham
Surveyor General

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BELEN

Although the history of areas surrounding Belen can be traced back to the Indian uprising of 1680, Belen itself was founded in 1740 when it was settled by two Spaniards named Diego Torres and Antonio Salazar who had previously petitioned the Governor and Captain General of New Mexico, Don Gaspar de Mendoza, for a grant of land on the west side of the Sandia Mountains and east of the Rio Puerco.

This grant was officially turned over to Torres by one Nicholas de Chavez.

Officially the grant was known as Nuestra Senora de Belen (Our Lady of Belen) with Belen being Spanish for Bethlehem.

Belen was a strategic point because of its location on the Camino Real, the royal road that eventually led into Mexico. For this reason the Spanish authorities established a fort in Belen in 1760 that was manned by a citizens' army and served to protect the people from the Indians, particularly from a large settlement of Apaches which covered the area of Sabinal, just south of Belen as late as the close of the 18th century.

No figures are available for the population of Belen in 1740. But in 1797 Fray Francisco de Hezia made a provincial survey which reported Belen having "one administrator or parish priest, 124 Indians and 1283 Spaniards."

The town continued to grow as an 1805 report showed Belen having "one administrator, 107 Indians and 1588 Spaniards." That growth attracted the attention of the authorities who decided to raise the political status of Belen from that of a "Paraje" or precinct to that of a "Partido" or district. And in the military line Belen was promoted from the status of a fort, manned by the civilian population, to that of a "puesto" or place with a barrack and soldiers in 1804.

When the Mexican revolution of 1821 occurred, Mexico declared her independence of Spain and at the same time annexed New Mexico as a territory of the new Republic.

. Belen was growing until in 1856 it was divided into two sections — Plaza Vieja (Old Town) and New Town, each of which was striving to be the leading influence in town affairs. Plaza Vieja had tradition, the old church and a settled community but the vigorous New Town was forging ahead with new farming lands.

. The controversy between the two 'towns' of Belen came to a head in 1856 when a young priest, Fr. Paulet, arrived in Belen. Upon seeing the ruinous condition of the church at Plaza Vieja, the Father announced that a building program was a pressing need — the question was would it be built in New or Old Town?

the Father announced the church at Plaza Vieja was to be abandoned and the new church was to be built in New Town.

Although the decision met with disfavor from some residents, work on the new church began in September, 1858 after the construction of a priest's rectory was completed. The work on the new church was successfully completed on Nov. 19, 1860. On that date Bishop Lamy rode down from Santa Fe and blessed the new church.

The Civil War found Belen, along with the rest of the Southwest, remaining loyal to the Union. This loyalty was demonstrated when the Confederate troops marched into New Mexico from Texas seeking to annex the Southwest as a door to California gold. The men of Belen immediately organized themselves into volunteer companies,

At first the fortunes of war went against the Union forces and Belen's townspeople watched in amazement as the Confederates galloped into their town in March 1862 with some 400 cavalry. Soon after that though, on March 28, 1862, the Confederates were defeated at Apache Canyon near Santa Fe and by the following July, they had withdrawn from New Mexico.

Belen experienced its last Indian raid in 1864 when the Navajos swept down into the town, stealing and driving off cows, goats and sheep as well as taking some captives. Those captives were later exchanged for Indians who had been captured by Spaniards living in Belen.

The 1870's saw even more development coming to Belen. In 1873 a post office was established with John Becker, Sr., as the first postmaster, a post he held until 1913. Prior to the founding of the post office, all Belen mail came through Los Lunas.

In 1880 the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe built the first section of its line in Valencia County from Albuquerque. The road did not immediately stimulate the growth of Belen for the 1890 population figure was 685. But the railroad did bring different people in

in 1885 Protestant services were first held in Belen.

The turn of the century, 1900, saw Belen's population at 673.

The First National Bank of Belen was incorporated with a capital stock of $25,000 on Jan. 28, 1903, giving the town much needed stability.

the grist mill owned by Mr. Becker was turning out 100 barrels of flour daily, Belen led Valencia County in flour milling, the only type of manufacturing in the county.

At the same time Belen also became the chief Valencia County center for the sale of agricultural products.

In 1907, the Belen Cut-Off, linking Amarillo and Belen, was completed with the tracks running through the city limits. Belen profited greatly by this for it made her a railroad center and an important shipping point for the productive Rio Grande Valley. Among the items brought to Belen were the shops, roundhouse, cooling stations, yards containing miles of track and a depot. The 1910 census of Belen shows a population of 1,733, an increase of 1100 in ten years.

May 2, 1924, the Chamber of Commerce was organized.

In 1929 the Woman's Club opened a public library which has since been enriched by many contributions and is now the Belen Public Library.

in 1918 the incorporated Village of Belen came into existence.

MAYORS OF BELEN

Belen's first mayor, Bernard Jacobson (1918-22), and a board of trustees were elected shortly after to manage the affairs of the new village, population about 1500. The first village ordinance was passed July 1, 1919 to provide for methods of enacting ordinances providing for officials, taxes, traffic, and fire.

In 1921 a Model T fire truck was purchased, and a fire chief was appointed.

Electricity came to Belen in 1923.

The Manuel Garcia administration (1922-30) installed a sewer and water system with the first water and sewer bonds in 1924, and by 1928 more bonds were passed to provide all residents with connections. The village posted names of all streets and numbered lots to make free mail delivery to each door possible. A Belen-to-Los-Lunas road was prepared for surfacing work to make the trip "fast, smooth, and comfortable." John Becker, Sr. donated a block of land in 1927 for what was to become Anna Becker Park.

A building code was adopted in 1929, and Belen's water plant and several new buildings along Main Street built up the village. The library opened in the Becker Building with 395 volumes. Water meters were installed and it became "unlawful to use water from the village of Belen without first installing a meter." In 1930 regulations for building permits were imposed. By 1931 Belen had improved on its building code, the State Highway Department paved and oiled Main Street and several other streets, traffic ordinances were enacted, and stop signs and street signs were installed. Population grew to 2,116 in 1930.

Con Hendren was mayor from 1930-32.

The Mel Tate administration (1932-40) updated the sewer system and passed ordinances providing for curbs and gutters. Automatic street lights were installed at Main and Becker in 1935. In 1937 village offices were moved to the present location at 503 Becker Avenue from its previous Becker location, a sidewalk ordinance was passed, and a grader to maintain streets was purchased. Natural gas came in 1939, and lights at the softball field were installed in 1940 when night games became a big attraction.

The Waite Keeney administration (1940-42) changed Belen's status in 1940 when the village status was dropped for township May 16. Population increased to 3,038 in 1940.

The war years were quiet, but in 1947 the hospital was built, street lights were installed, garbage collection began, a new fire truck was purchased, a police court was established, and an airport was located near the fair grounds.

Mayor Don Redenbaugh (1942-46) served until health forced his retirement at which time L.C. Becker (1946-50) was appointed to serve out the term.

Swimming became more popular in 1948 when the town purchased a pool for residents, and a mosquito spray program was initiated with the purchase of equipment to spray for insects. The Belen Bus Company began service in 1949.

The Earl Peter administration (1950-56) purchased the first police car, a garbage truck was purchased, a sewage disposal plant was completed, and an improved water and sewer system was installed. Population in 1950 was 4,495.

In 1952 the AT & SF Railroad expanded its facilities, the bridge over the Rio Grande was improved, and the water well and million-gallon storage tank on the west mesa were installed.

Paving district #1 was established in 1956 when 113 blocks were paved; by 1959 the 3rd district had been established, covering 90 blocks.

The 1956 election began the terms of Neel Alexander as mayor and what was to become the longest individual mayoral term of service in Belen's history — 20 years (1956-60; 62-66; 68-80).

A new swimming pool was built in 1956 near the junior high school. In 1958 a new fire truck was purchased, the overpass constructed north of town eliminated major traffic hazards, and in 1959 a street sweeper was purchased.

The Hollis Wilson administration (1960-62) saw a resurgence in Belen's economy with the Rio Grande Estates development (Tierra del Sol since 1981) to the east of the river. Stop lights on Main and Becker were installed in 1961 to handle increased traffic resulting from the new development. Direct distance dialing came to Belen in 1960, when the population grew to 5,031.

In 1966 the Carter Waid administration (1966-68) heralded Belen as a city, leaving the town behind. Improvements and additions in Belen's water system and more recreation facilities followed. The city's first personnel merit system was enacted, city ordinances were codified, paved streets were sealed, and Old Town sewer bond issue were okayed by voters.

Neel Alexander, 1956-60.
1962-66, 1969-80.

In 1969 the I-25 bypass construction began. Eight miles of four lanes with two interchanges were part of the $5.5 million project. Seventy blocks of streets were paved with walks and gutters in 1969, and in 1970 traffic lights were installed at Baca and Main Street. Building permits totaled $299,661 in 1969, the year the big flood hit Belen causing $2.1 million in damage. The state granted $200,000 in relief. The city dump was moved from Aragon to west mesa, and in 1970 the population declined to 4,823.

In 1976, a $2 million water tank project was approved. The Eastern Valencia Hospital was constructed in 1977, the year the Becker Dalies Company closed its doors after 100 years of service, and the Belen Valley State Park broke ground. A survey showed that 7,261 persons lived in Belen. Recreation facilities were expanded with the creation of a mini park at Aragon and Gabaldon Road and the swimming pool at the high school in 1978. In 1979 the Neel Alexander Airport was completed. The University of New Mexico Resident Center opened in Rio Communities in 1978, but in 1980 a mill levy was passed making a branch college possible by fall 1981.

Boleslo Lovato was sworn in as mayor in March 1980, finishing out Neel Alexander's term. Ida Oliver became the first woman to sit on the Belen City Council, the city approved a budget in excess of $2 million, and the library had 41,048 volumes. Belen's population grew to 7,900 and city property taxes were reduced in 1980.

The new sewage treatment plant to begin construction in 1981 will serve 12,000 with an expansion capacity for 24,000. Cable television came to Belen in 1981, and a traffic signal was installed at Reinken and Jarales Road.

In 1981 the assessed valuation on 2,105 acres in Belen was $9,748,877. Gross receipts taxes were increased to 4½ percent, an air medical service was contracted to come to the airport, a pornography ordinance was passed, maintenance equipment and police vehicles were purchased, funds for new street identification signs were appropriated, and City Hall installed a time clock.

BHHC-4-1-11

Founding of Belen